

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:

22MI064

REPORT DATE:

May 18, 2024

INCIDENT DATE:

July 14, 2022

WORKER:

44-year-old

INDUSTRY:

Landscaping Services

OCCUPATION:

Tree Trimmer

EVENT TYPE:

Crushed by



The jack and ground condition.



The woodchipper axle.

Worker Crushed by Woodchipper while Changing Tire

SUMMARY

A 44-year-old tree trimmer was crushed while performing maintenance on a trailer mounted woodchipper. He had worked for his employer, a tree trimming service, for approximately three and a half months prior to the incident. He had recently taken a two-week leave of absence and the incident occurred on his third day after returning to work. His regular job responsibilities were to work as a ground crew member while the owner trimmed trees.

On the day of the incident, the employee dropped off a separate piece of equipment (a mini skid steer) for maintenance in a different town. The employee then travelled to meet the owner at a self-storage lot where the woodchipper was located to conduct maintenance. He was tasked with removing the wheel, fixing the tire, and placing the wheel back on the trailer. Simultaneously, the owner was changing the oil. To remove the wheel, a Pittsburgh Heavy Duty 12-ton Bottle Jack was placed under the trailer frame and the trailer was jacked up enough to remove the wheel. The ground underneath the trailer was composed of stones and gravel. After the wheel was removed, the victim got under the raised trailer to place a cement cinder block as an extra support. While under the trailer, the bottle jack shifted and the trailer fell fatally crushing him.

The owner called emergency services and attempted to lift the woodchipper off the victim using the mechanical dump bed on his work truck, which was unsuccessful. Emergency services arrived, lifted the trailer, and the victim was transported to a local hospital where he was later pronounced deceased.



The woodchipper wheel that was being serviced (red arrow). In the photo, the woodchipper is being supported (post-incident) by a concrete block.

REQUIREMENTS

Employers must:

- Ensure that employees shall not place his/her body beneath equipment, such as machines or materials, supported only by temporary single supporting means. See [408.10034\(12\)](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

MIFACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Prohibit employees from reaching under, working on, or climbing on a load supported by jacks (or any other temporary single supporting means). Secondary supports should always be used with jack stands (additional set of jack stands, wooden blocking, etc.).
- Ensure the surface on which the jack is placed is level and capable of taking the imposed loads.
- Provide comprehensive training to employees on safe operating procedures, principles of stability, and incident prevention techniques (e.g., use of nonslip pads at point of contact).

[MIFACE](#) (Michigan Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation), Michigan State University (MSU) Occupational & Environmental Medicine, 909 Fee Road, 117 West Fee Hall, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1315.

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CITATIONS

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following serious citations at the conclusion of its investigation.

- Serious: [408.10034\(12\): GI PART 1, GENERAL PROVISIONS](#)
 - An employee shall not place his/her body beneath equipment, such as vehicles, machines, or materials, supported only by a jack, overhead hoist, chain fall, or any other temporary single supporting means, unless safety stands, blocks or other support system capable of supporting the total imposed weight is used to protect the employee in case of failure of the supporting system.
- Serious: [408.13838\(2\): GI PART 38, HAND AND PORTABLE POWERED TOOLS](#)
 - A jack shall be set on or against a firm foundation or blocking. If a jack, at the point of contact with the load, can slip, a wood block or nonslip device shall be placed between the cap and the load.
- Serious: [408.13838\(4\): GI PART 38, HAND AND PORTABLE POWERED TOOLS](#)
 - After a load has been raised or moved by a jack, it shall be secured by cribbing, blocks or stands before work is started under or between the supported load.

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