

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:

22MI179

REPORT DATE:

11/07/2024

INCIDENT DATE:

Spring 2022

WORKER:

64-year-old

INDUSTRY:

Farming

OCCUPATION:

Farmer

EVENT TYPE:

Struck By



The tractor found stalled against a tree.

Farmer Fatally Injured When Run Over by Tractor

SUMMARY

A 64-year-old farmer suffered a fatal injury when his head and upper chest were run over by the left rear wheel of a tractor. The farmer had been getting the tractor and implement ready for plowing a field. The tractor was an Allis-Chalmers Model A-C7030 diesel tractor weighing 12,434 pounds. After running over the victim, the tractor continued for an additional 25–30 feet before running into a tree. Tractor controls were found in the run position.

Prior to the incident the deceased's brother, and another farm worker were working with the farmer to prepare the tractor for plowing. The farm worker left to deliver a load of firewood and was gone for approximately 30 minutes. The farmer's brother also left for about 20 minutes to get a soda from a nearby store. He returned from the store to find his brother fatally injured. EMS was called at 2:40 pm. Time of death was pronounced on scene at 2:47 pm.

The tractor was found not running but was still in gear. Deep ruts in the mud and damage to the tree indicated the tractor stalled out against the tree. The tractor was set to run, choke out. A hydraulic fluid 5-gallon container and dark fluid ground stain were found near the rear tractor tire prints at the beginning of path of travel. The victim was on his left side in the tire tread path and had a large green hitch pin, normally used to connect implements to the rear hitch, positioned near his hand against his left arm. The incident was unwitnessed; however, it appeared the farmer was on the ground in front of the tire perhaps reaching under the running tractor. A dark liquid was on the ground a few feet away from the deceased and unidentified hoses on the tractor were found disconnected. The presence of a 5-gallon hydraulic fluid container, hydraulic fluid on the ground, and disconnected hoses suggested that the farmer was working on the hydraulic system.

The cause of death was listed as blunt force injury of the head and chest. Injuries listed include multiple skull fractures, cerebral contusions and lacerations, and bilateral pulmonary contusions. A postmortem toxic screen was positive for caffeine.



View of path of travel (orange), and ground stain and left tire imprint (yellow arrows). A hydraulic fluid container was found at the tree to right of the hydraulic fluid stain.

REQUIREMENTS

MIOSHA Part 53, Farm Field Equipment, 1928.57(a)(6) Operating instructions.

At the time of initial assignment and at least annually thereafter, the employer shall instruct every employee in the safe operation and servicing of all covered equipment with which he is or will be involved, including at least the following safe operating practices:

- (a)(6)(iii) Stop engine, disconnect the power source, and wait for all machine movement to stop before servicing, adjusting, cleaning, or unclogging the equipment, except where the machine must be running to be properly serviced or maintained, in which case the employer shall instruct employees as to all steps and procedures which are necessary to safely service or maintain the equipment.
- (a)(6)(iv) Make sure everyone is clear of machinery before starting the engine, engaging power, or operating the machine; and

MIOSHA Part 53, Farm Field Equipment, 1928.57(a)(11) Servicing and maintenance.

Whenever a moving machinery part presents a hazard during servicing or maintenance, the engine shall be stopped, the power source disconnected, and all machine movement stopped before servicing or maintenance is performed, except where the employer can establish that:

- (a)(11)(i) The equipment must be running to be properly serviced or maintained.
- (a)(11)(ii) The equipment cannot be serviced or maintained while a guard or guards otherwise required by this standard are in place; and
- (a)(11)(iii) The servicing or maintenance can be safely performed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MIFACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences, individuals working with farm equipment should:

- Shut down farm equipment before performing maintenance. If maintenance requires equipment to be running, consult manufacturer guidance, and only perform procedures that do not place body parts in a danger zone of operating equipment including path of travel.
- Develop and implement written safe work procedures for farm equipment maintenance and operation.
- Conduct training including verification of competency under expected conditions of operation and maintenance of equipment systems.