Health, Safety and Environment

Lessons Learned

Excavator - Near Serious Injury

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| Subject | Worker struck by excavator bucket |
| Situation | A Contractor employee was seriously injured when he was struck by an excavator bucket.  On the day of the incident a team of workers were manually carrying out ground works and repairing the boundary wall.  This team requested support from an excavator to transfer backfill material. The excavator mobilised, however with its first movement, the bucket was swung towards the back fill material, striking one of the workers adjacent to the boundary wall.  The injured person was placed into a site pick-up truck and transferred to the clinic, where first aid was administered by the company nurse. The injured person was then taken to the nearest hospital, by the same pick-up truck. He sustained multiple fractured ribs and bruising. | |
| Lessons Learned | Control measures indicated in the risk assessment / method statement were not implemented. However, the workforce also felt that the procedure / risk assessment was unworkable for short duration tasks. At the time of this incident no direct supervision was available at the work location, as the Foreman was supervising multiple work fronts. Pre start plan and briefing did not include the use of excavator. Workers were present within the danger zone of mobile plant. Emergency response was not effective. | |
| Recommendation/ Comment | Every operation must have competent supervision.  Where there is a change to a planned task, the operation should be stopped and reassessed.  The Contractor should ensure an effective feedback system is in place to facilitate employees raising concerns.  A system of control must be implemented when workers and machinery are working in close proximity, such as physical barrier and/or flagman. Clear site rules and guidance for working around plant and equipment, must be prepared and strictly enforced. Operators of plant and machinery should also always carry out a 360 visual observation prior to commencing operations, as well as after periods of inactivity.  Emergency arrangements should be reviewed and employees with potentially serious injuries should not be transported to hospital in site vehicles. | |
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