



FACE

Fatal Facts



November 2002
Report # 47-3-2002

Construction Worker Struck and Killed by Car

Spotting construction vehicles and machinery incorrectly can prove fatal to you or your employees

A 55-year-old excavator operator was killed after being struck by a car. He was struck while standing in a two-lane state highway acting as a spotter so that the driver of a dump truck could back out of a driveway onto the roadway. The construction work crew, including the victim, a dump truck driver, and a laborer, had just cleared a small mudslide blocking a ditch at the side of the road. At 9:30 A.M., the driver of the dump truck was ready to back his vehicle, with a backhoe on a trailer, out of a driveway onto the highway. The victim, attempting to direct traffic and spot the driver of the dump truck, stepped onto the highway and was struck by an automobile. He was wearing dark pants, a dark shirt, and no high visibility garments. The driver of the automobile did not see him. He was airlifted to a medical center where he died a short time later. There were no temporary signs posted along the shoulder of the road that would have warned motorists of workers ahead. Prior to the incident, the laborer had been standing on the shoulder of the road holding a paddle with "slow" written on it. At the time of the incident she was not performing these duties. The posted speed on the highway was 35 mph. The State Patrol estimated that the automobile that struck the victim was traveling at 38 mph.



Know where hazards exist and know safe practices that help prevent injury.



Stay in the safety zone

The following practices could save your life:

When working on or near a public road:

- Conduct a hazard assessment of the worksite,
- Do not put yourself at risk of being struck by a vehicle and do not get caught in a situation where there's no escape route,
- Don't try to direct traffic unless you are a flagger and are following flagging safety rules,
- Place warning signs along the road, and
- Wear high-visibility safety clothing.

Conduct a hazard assessment of the worksite.

The job-site coordinator (supervisor or foreman) should make a thorough assessment of potential worksite safety hazards. Make certain there is a plan for work being conducted in close proximity of a public road or highway and for the safe handling of intermittent roadway traffic stoppages, such as a truck entering a roadway. Plan the entry and exit to and from the worksite to reduce exposure to traffic. All workers on site should have a safety and operations orientation.

Do not put yourself at risk of being struck by a vehicle.

There are safe ways to direct traffic and spot trucks. Approved methods should be used.

Don't try to direct traffic unless you are a flagger and are following flagging safety rules.

A spotter whose job is to help construction equipment or vehicles with backing-up or otherwise maneuvering should never attempt to direct traffic in a public roadway. This is the job of a certified traffic flagger. Flaggers are trained to allow vehicles to safely travel through a road

construction work zone and to keep the workers safe. Trying to direct traffic, even if it is "just for a minute", could put you at risk of serious injury or death.

Place warning signs along the road.

Signs give motorists warning of work ahead. Depending on the work being done, warning signs such as ROAD WORK AHEAD, SHOULDER WORK, or ROAD MACHINERY AHEAD should be used. If a flagger will be used, a FLAGGER AHEAD sign should also be used. These signs should tell motorists what to expect, what they should do, and whether to expect a flagger.

Wear high-visibility safety clothing.

High visibility clothing allows motorists to see you better. For daytime work, your vest, shirt, or jacket should be orange, yellow, yellow-green, or a fluorescent version of these colors. For nighttime work, your clothing should be made of retroreflective material. It should be orange, yellow, white, silver, yellow-green, or a fluorescent version of these colors. A high visibility hard hat should also be worn.

Danger! Construction workers are routinely exposed to traffic hazards in Washington State.

Getting Help

- Signaling Flaggers: WAC 296-155-305 Signaling Flaggers.
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/wisha/topics/flagger.htm>
- Accident Prevention Program: WAC 296-155-110 Accident Prevention Program.
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/rules/Safety-Health/default.htm>
- Warning Signs: WAC 296-155-300 Accident Prevention Signs and Tags.
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/rules/wacs.htm>

- High-visibility Apparel: WAC 296-155-200 General Requirements <http://www.lni.wa.gov/rules/wacs.htm>
- If you are working on or near a road: Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) 2000, Millenium Edition, Part 6 Temporary Traffic Control, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Office of Transportation Operations, HOTO, Room 3408, Washington, DC 20590. More information available online at: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/> or to read a copy contact any Department of Labor and Industries service location.
- Highway work zones. Injury prevention recommendations from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) report entitled Building Safer Highway Work Zones: Measures to Prevent Worker Injuries from Vehicle and Equipment, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2001-128. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/2001128.html> or available free from: Publications Dissemination, EID, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 4676 Columbia Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45226-1998.
- National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse. <http://wzsafety.tamu.edu/> or call (888) 447-5556.

WISHA Consultation Program

Washington State
Department of Labor and Industries

Everett (Region 1, Northwest Washington)
425-290-1300

Seattle (Region 2, King County)
206-515-2880

Tacoma (Region 3, Pierce, Kitsap, Clallam, and Jefferson Counties)
253-596-3800

Olympia (Region 4, Southwest Washington)
360-902-5799

East Wenatchee (Region 5, Central and Southeastern Washington)
509-886-6500

Spokane (Region 6, Eastern Washington)
509-324-2600

WA Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation (FACE) Program

Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program
WA State Department of Labor and Industries
PO Box 44330
Olympia, WA 98504
(360) 902-5669 or; 1-888-667-4277 (toll-free)
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/sharp/face>
clav235@lni.wa.gov



The Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries is funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to run a Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program in Washington State (Cooperative Agreement No.: U60/CCU-13928-06). The FACE Program collects information on all work-related fatalities in Washington State, investigates select incidents using a safety systems/root-cause approach, and develops reports and other outreach activities. The Program is not compliance-oriented and has a goal of reducing the number of work-related acute trauma injuries and deaths.