

Safety Flash - Incident with Property Damage

Incident: A loader backed over the hood of a utility vehicle, damaging its windshield. The laborer driving the utility vehicle had told the operator to backfill around a manhole a short distance away. Then the laborer made a U-turn and drove to the right of another manhole nearby.

The laborer expected the operator to drive left of the nearby manhole to get to the second manhole. However, the operator decided first to add more stone to the manhole nearby before driving to the second manhole as the laborer requested.

The operator added stone to the first manhole. Before back-dragging, he checked the backup camera screen and didn't see anything. The laborer was directly behind the loader when it started backing up and struck his utility vehicle.

Possible contributing factors:

- The utility vehicle was too close behind the loader to move out of the way.
- The operator and laborer miscommunicated about which manhole should be backfilled and when – the laborer asked the operator to backfill the far manhole immediately, and the operator decided to add stone to the closest manhole first.
- The laborer was driving the utility vehicle to the right of the first manhole, and thought the operator was driving to the left.
- The operator's view behind the loader was in the shade of the machine and the camera picture was not clear.
- The operator and laborer had been working together and were possibly complacent.

Primary contributing factor:

- The operator and laborer miscommunicated about which manhole should be backfilled and when – the laborer asked the operator to backfill the far manhole immediately, and the operator decided to add stone to the closest manhole first.

Possible solutions:

- Make sure crew members communicate clearly with each other.
- Make sure workers are aware of their surroundings and how close they are to equipment and activities in the area.
- Don't follow mobile equipment too closely and give yourself room and time to react.
- Make sure you can see mirrors.

Action plan:

- A jobsite stand-down was held with all crews to discuss blind spots.
- The RLI annual safety meeting addressed working around equipment and blind spots.
- Training will continue on working around mobile equipment.

Keep improving

Your health and safety are our core value on every project. If you see a way we can support you in keeping our job sites safe, see your supervisor or contact: Jim Philo, 419/654-2043; Rich Franklin, Michigan, 734/679-7283; Alan Doane, Cleveland, 440/429-0639; Rick Wallace, Lima, 419/705-9170 or Mark Hoffman, 419/360-9280.

