

Surveyor's Assistant Crushed By Bulldozer



A surveyor's assistant on a summer job was part of a crew assigned to build a temporary access road. Before starting the job, the foreman, the bulldozer operator, the surveyor and the assistant had discussed the project, but no specific directions were given to the bulldozer operator about what route to take. It was informally assumed that each person knew what the other would be doing. The surveyor and the assistant were setting stakes to mark the road. They started working together, but at some point separated. The operator of the bulldozer, which was pulling a scraper, made four sweeps in a counter-clockwise direction. He then switched to a clockwise direction. It was on one of these passes that the bulldozer struck and killed the surveyor's assistant. The operator had seen the surveyor at a safe distance from the machine and assumed the assistant was with him. The assistant died of massive crushing injuries.

When workers are near large machinery all day long, they sometimes take this dangerous equipment for granted. They become accustomed to the machines working just a few feet away and forget the danger. Many machines such as this bulldozer have large blind spots where the operator cannot see pedestrians, workers and other obstructions. Heavy equipment operators must never make assumptions about the location of people around them. Setting the stakes at the same time the bulldozer was moving also proved to be an unsafe practice. The route that the bulldozer would be taking should also have been discussed in the pre-job meeting.