



Operating a mini skid steer loader with attachments

This Alert is aimed at owner operators and machinery hire outlets to reinforce the requirement for safe operating procedures when using mini skid steer loaders with attachments.

Background

A worker's lower legs were amputated as he became entangled in the trenching chain whilst removing dirt in front of the trenching attachment with his boot while it was still cutting a trench.

Mini skid steer loaders have dead man controls for the operation of the loader, but this does not stop the hydraulic operation of the trencher attachments.

A crumber bar was fitted to the trenching attachment; this guards the front end of the trenching chain when cutting shallow trenches. At the time of the incident this guard was located in a raised position not covering the trencher cutting chain.

Contributing factors

- The manufacturer's safety instructions requiring a restricted zone around the trencher attachment when in operation were not followed.
- The crumber bar was not engaged which may have reduced or prevented the incident.
- The mini skid steer loader is not fitted with foot pressure sensors, or other controls, to stop the attachment moving parts when operators exit the operators' platform.

Action required

- Engage controls such as a spotter to ensure people, including the operator, do not approach the attachments whilst the machinery is in operation.
- Ensure that every dangerous part of powered mobile plant is, as far as is practical, securely guarded in accordance with regulations.
- Fit an auxiliary hydraulic shut off to all mini skid steer loaders if rotating attachments are to be fitted.

Further information

Manufacturer's operational manual for hydraulic control systems or Contact Dingo Australia

Information on safe guarding of machinery and plant can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

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