

Accident Investigation: Mobile Equipment July 30, 2002

A 49-year-old ironworker employed by a construction contractor was seriously injured when he was pinned between two forklifts at a construction site on a mine property. The victim and two other contractor employees were using one of the forklifts to tow a man-lift that was stuck in mud at the construction site. After freeing the mired man-lift, the victim was standing next to the forklift (the blue one in the photograph below left) that was used to tow the man-lift and approximately 10 feet down slope of the other forklift (the orange one shown in the photograph below left). The victim was struck by the orange forklift and pinned between the blue forklift's cab and the orange forklift's right front tire after it was accidentally set in motion when another contractor employee inadvertently released the parking brake while climbing into it's cab. The victim, who broke both of his legs, was airlifted to a nearby trauma center for medical treatment.



RECOMMENDATIONS: To prevent a similar accident from occurring and as required by the Safety and Health Regulations for Mineral Mining, equipment operators must ensure, either by a signal or other means, that all persons are clear before starting or moving equipment (4 VAC 25-40-1340). In addition, mobile equipment with wheels or tracks, when parked on a grade, must be either blocked or turned into a bank or rib unless the bucket or blade of the equipment is lowered to the ground to prevent movement (4 VAC 25-40-1510). In this particular incident, the parking brake control button of the mobile equipment is located in a position susceptible to inadvertent contact/release by operators entering or exiting the cab. Equipment operators should be made aware of this potential hazard.