

INDUSTRY ALERT

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Critical Injury

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Skidder door swings open, strikes wheel and is pushed back into cab

What happened?

A skidder operator was driving his machine down a roadway with considerable speed when he hit a bump. The door of the skidder swung open and contacted the front wheel. The door was torn from its hinges and pushed back into the cab. The door struck the operator, who was critically injured.

Why did it happen?

The manufacturer of the skidder indicated that there is a door stop provided for this machine at the time of manufacture. The door stop is adjusted to allow the door to open no more than 90 degrees, or perpendicular to the cab. The door stop consists of a plate welded to the outside of the lower door hinge that comes in contact with the door frame when the door is in the fully open position. In this incident, wear or misalignment of the hinges may have allowed the door to open wider than 90 degrees and to contact the front tire.

If an operator of a machine or the mechanic is unaware of this safety feature, it may have been missed during an inspection.

How can it be prevented?

Regular preventive maintenance on forestry equipment is vital to ensure that equipment is in peak operating condition at all times. Section 25 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires the employer to ensure that the equipment, materials and protective devices provided by the employer are maintained in good condition.

During the daily circle check by the operator, all parts of the machine need to be inspected for wear and tear. Hinges and door stops should be included in the circle check. (On some types of forestry equipment, the door stop mechanism is inside the cab.) If anything unusual is noticed, it must be reported by the operator, as per Section 28 of the Act, and repaired as soon as possible.

The operator of a machine and the mechanic who services it should be familiar with all the aspects of the machine, including the safety features that have been included by the manufacturer. This information is usually found in the operator's manual of a machine, as well as a suggested regular maintenance schedule.

In addition to ensuring that all components of their machine are in safe operating condition, operators must always drive at speeds that are appropriate to the ground and weather conditions.

Please tear along the perforated line.

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Although the description of circumstances arises from an actual situation, this Industry Alert does not reflect the final analysis of the situation, nor is it meant to assign blame on the part of any person or member firm. For further information, contact OFSWA at 705-474-7233. For details on Ministry of Labour prosecutions regarding recent health and safety incidents in Ontario workplaces, visit www.labour.gov.on.ca and click on "News Releases".