

# INDUSTRY ALERT

## FATALITY

### *Loader operator pinned between boom cylinder and cab*

#### **What happened?**

A worker was operating a log loader when the right window of the loader's cabin was shattered. The operator was discovered with his upper body protruding through the right side window opening and his head and arm trapped between the main cylinder and the cab. His injuries were fatal.

#### **Why did it happen?**

The exact cause of the shattering of the loader's side window is unknown, and theories differ on whether the source of the impact was internal or external. Since the operator's upper body was discovered in front of the main boom cylinder, the boom must have been in or near the full up position. Incidental contact between the operator's lower body and the machine's controls somehow led to the operator's head and arm becoming trapped in the path of the boom.

The loader is a tracked excavator converted for forestry use. The conversion provides a protective outer screen for the front and rear windows only. Tempered glass is used for the right side window. Although tempered glass is some five times stronger than regular glass, it can break easily if an edge defect was created during manufacturing process or as a result of handling. The fact that the right-side window of the loader had previously been broken by an external impact and was replaced with original equipment purchased through the dealer leads to the conclusion that tempered glass doesn't adequately protect the loader operator from a significant impact, regardless of whether the source of the impact is external or internal.

#### **How can it be prevented?**

While the loader's controls are active, the operator should wear a seat belt. If for any reason the operator has to remove his seat belt or has to leave the cab, the safety lock lever that activates the machine's controls should be in the de-active position.

The log loader cab's side window glass serves as a guard that prevents the operator from coming into contact with the pinch point between the cab and the main boom cylinder. If this guard is broken for any reason, the machine should be shut down at once with the grapple lowered to the ground. (Regulation for Industrial Establishments, Sections 24 and 26.)

A screen or equivalent protection over the right side window could prevent a similar incident from occurring. Lexan glass provides more appropriate protection than tempered glass for operators of this type of loader.

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