

Raisin Picker Breaks Leg While Riding on Bin Trailer¹

California NURSE Project²

SUMMARY : CASE 192-382-01

Raisin pickers were riding bin trailers from the vineyard to the road. These trailers carry bins of raisins and are pulled by tractors. They have narrow platforms for workers to stand on and sort raisins while a tractor slowly pulls the trailer down the row. When the tractor leaves the field, other workers sometimes climb onto the platforms and catch a ride.

After a few hours of work, the platforms get slippery with dirt and raisins. As a raisin picker was riding the bin trailer out of the field, he slipped, and his foot hit a moving tire. The tire pulled his foot into the gap between the tire and the edge of the platform. His leg was crushed. No crew member had been trained in first aid. A co-worker tried to free the leg of the injured worker by backing the trailer up, which might have resulted in further damage to the leg. He spent forty-three days in the hospital while doctors tried to save his leg.

How could this injury have been prevented?

- Equipment should be designed with safety in mind.
- Workers should not ride on equipment that is not designed for transport.
- Employers should not purchase/use equipment that can easily catch a foot or clothing with a tire or moving parts.
- Every field work team should have a person certified in first aid.

- Workers and employers should call 911 if someone has a severe injury.

The NURSE (Nurses Using Rural Sentinel Events) project is conducted by the California Occupational Health Program of the California Department of Health Services, in conjunction with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The program's goal is to prevent occupational injuries associated with agriculture. Injuries are reported by hospitals, emergency medical services, clinics, medical examiners, and coroners. Selected cases are followed up by conducting interviews of injured workers, co-workers, employers, and others involved in the incident. An on-site safety investigation is also conducted. These investigations provide detailed information on the worker, the work environment, and the potential risk factors resulting in the injury. Each investigation concludes with specific recommendations designed to prevent injuries, for the use of employers, workers, and others concerned about health and safety in agriculture.

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