

INJURY NARRATIVE

Orchard Laborer Severely Injured When Thrown from Bin Carrier

Industry: Orchard
Task: Operating bin carrier
Occupation: Orchard laborer
Type of Incident: Thrown from mobile machinery

Incident Date: June 18, 2015
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Incident scene showing the fruit bin carrier the laborer was operating on a cherry orchard road when it rolled backwards downhill, causing him to be thrown from it and severely injured.

In June of 2015, a 28-year-old orchard laborer was severely injured when he was thrown from the fruit bin carrier that he was operating. Hired a month before the injury incident, he had done a variety of job tasks at his employer's orchard. He did not have experience operating tractors or other similar machinery. During the cherry harvest at the orchard, he was assigned the task of operating a bin carrier. A bin carrier is a mobile machine used to transport fruit bins in and out of the orchard during a harvest. This model was 25 feet long and 64 inches wide, and carried six bins stacked two high. It had a manual transmission with a high and low gear and could be operated in either two-wheel or four-wheel drive. The injured worker's employer had not instructed him on how to safely operate the bin

carrier. The day of the incident was his second day driving the bin carrier. On this day, he was driving the bin carrier along a dirt orchard road to deliver six bins full of cherries to a loading area. As he was driving up the five degree slope of the road, he lost control of the bin carrier. It began to roll backward. As it rolled downhill he was thrown from the operator's seat. The bin carrier left the road, coming to rest in the orchard. The laborer was taken to a hospital with injuries to his spine, resulting in quadriplegia. An investigation found that the bin carrier was not in the correct gear or in four-wheel drive, as needed to navigate the slope, and that the laborer was not wearing the seatbelt.

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Requirements

- Instruct all employees in safe working practices at the beginning of employment. Your instruction must be tailored to the types of hazards to which employees are exposed. See [WAC 296-307-030\(1\)](#)

Recommendations

- Provide training to all employees instructing them how to safely operate all equipment and machinery that they will be required to use. This training should be specific, detailed, and hands-on. New employees, as well as employees assigned a new task should undergo this training.
- A supervisor should ensure that an employee is able to demonstrate their ability to safely operate equipment and machinery before performing the tasks they are assigned.
- Employees should be encouraged to work in a safe manner and ask someone for help if they are unsure of anything.
- Ensure that employees use a seatbelt while operating mobile machinery. If the worker had used the installed seatbelt, he would not have been ejected from the operator's seat.

This narrative was developed to alert employers and employees of a serious traumatic injury to a worker in Washington State and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the injury.

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