Bulldozer Slides Over Worker

A 52-year-old ranch hand died when he was run over by a bulldozer on a cattle ranch in Oregon.

The victim was an experienced logger, with most of his work history in the logging industry. He usually set his own chokers behind the bulldozer, and operated the bulldozer to pull logs to the landing.

With the engine running, gear in neutral and parking brake set, the ranch hand had exited the cab and was busy setting chokers to logs behind the bulldozer, which abruptly slid backward and over him. The bulldozer did not slip into gear, but the tracks rested on woody debris, which may have contributed to the slide. The victim was pinned under the bulldozer, and was pronounced dead at the scene.

The sheriff’s department inspected the bulldozer and determined the brakes were in working condition. Cause of death was multiple blunt trauma.

Recommendations:

- Before exiting, the bulldozer operator must lower the front blade to the ground.
- Never rely solely on the brakes to prevent movement; bulldozer tracks may be unstable.
- Develop a site-specific safety plan.

Source: Oregon Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report 04OR023.