Skid Steer Mechanic Pinned Between Boom and Cab



Dale Scott was in the mechanic’s shop alone fixing a leaky left rear tire on a front-end loader. The loader had a control safety lockout bar, but it was out of adjustment. Instead of centering the controls in “neutral,” it caused them to lock in the “down” position, dropping the boom arms if the controls were moved while the bar was in place.

To get the tire off, Scott lifted the machine on its bucket, and blocked up the middle of the loader. This enabled him to raise either end like a see-saw using the bucket, with the block as a pivot. This was common practice, but dangerous and unstable. The hub was too low to replace the wheel. Dale needed to raise the rear wheels by letting off pressure on the bucket, dropping the front end.

Instead of climbing into the cab, Dale stood in front, between the lifting arms, directly below a cross member. He started the engine, reached into the cab, and moved the control lever. At that point, the faulty safety bar locked the lever in the “down” position, dropping the lifting arms. Scott was pinned between the cross member and cab, where he was found dead of his injuries.

Safety lockouts are there for your protection. Make sure they’re working right! Never operate the controls from anywhere but the control position. Your life is at risk when you use equipment the wrong way.

Source: US DOL Mine Health and Safety Administration, Fatal Powered Haulage Accident No. 2002241