Tobacco Worker Dies After Tractor Overturns



A migrant farm worker died after the tractor he was driving overturned on a country road. The victim, who had no experience driving on public roads, was pulling a load of tobacco when the wagon jack-knifed and broke loose from the tractor. The tractor slid sideways, flipped over and came to rest on the victim, who was not wearing a seatbelt. Other workers following in a van found the worker gasping for air but unresponsive. They drove him to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

The victim was one of several migrant workers in a group that travelled around the United States following crop planting and harvesting. He did not speak English and it is unclear if training he received was translated into Spanish.

Workers who speak a language other than English, or who speak only limited English, should request training be provided in their language. In this instance, only one of several family members working on the farm spoke very limited English. The worker interpreted to some degree, however, it is unlikely this would have been sufficient. Farm workers should protect themselves by wearing a seatbelt while driving tractors. Some older tractors, made without seatbelts, can be retrofitted with restraining devices.