



Alaska FACE Facts

Occupational Injury Prevention Program
Section of Epidemiology
Division of Public Health
Department of Health and Social Services

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Twice on the Same Day

Two occupational fatalities occurred on November 8, 1996:



Incident #1: A crew member died from injuries after he was struck in the chest by a grease fitting when he attempted to remove it from a rudder shaft tube. He was completing routine maintenance of the steering system by pumping grease into the shaft tube using a grease gun. Assuming the grease zirk had malfunctioned, he began to unscrew the fitting. Grease guns can deliver 10,000 psi while the smaller single-handed grease guns can deliver 3,500 psi.

Recommendations

- ensure training for procedures and provide written guidelines for future reference
- encourage workers to actively participate in workplace safety



Incident #2: On the same day a alpine ski guide/patroller died when he disembarked from a snow tracked vehicle. Not realizing the victim had left the passenger compartment, the vehicle operator began to reverse direction of the tracked vehicle. The victim became entangled in the undercarriage and was crushed.

Recommendations

- develop, implement, and enforce a comprehensive written safety program;
- consider installing two-way communication devices inside the separate compartments of track vehicles so that operators and passengers can communicate without leaving their compartments.

Additionally,

- equipment manufacturers should consider equipment engineering designs and controls to detect and warn mobile equipment operators of the potential presence of individuals in the blind spot of the equipment.

While dramatically different, the end results were the same. Inexperience does not seem to be a factor while complacency may be a significant element in these deaths.

The Alaska Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program is administered by the Occupational Injury Prevention Program, Section of Epidemiology, Department of Health and Social Services under a cooperative agreement with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. For more information or a copy of this FACE report, contact the Occupational Injury Prevention Office (907) 269-8000 or visit our website <http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/programs/injury>