

HAZARD ALERT

Industry: Oil & Gas Pipeline Construction, Repair Age: 53 years Experience: 20 years Area: Northern B.C.

Jump-started crawler runs over operator

A heavy equipment operator was driving a side boom crawler dozer to assist with setting pipe for a pipeline. The operator shut off the crawler to talk to another worker. While in the driver's seat, he tried to restart the crawler but it would not start since it was in gear.

The operator then decided to show the other worker how to jump-start, or bypass start, the crawler. The operator climbed off the crawler and walked to the front of the right driving track. He reached into the engine compartment and used a screwdriver to bridge the electrical terminals on the starter solenoid.

The crawler started and, because it was in gear, moved forward, running over the operator. The other worker quickly climbed onto the crawler and backed it off the operator, but the operator died from his injuries a few minutes later.

The accident investigation found that jump-starting the crawler bypasses the start-in-neutral safety device, allowing the crawler to start in gear. Normally, the safety device prevents a crawler from being started from the driver's seat when its transmission is in gear.

Safe work practices:

- Never jump-start or bypass start mobile equipment.
- Start and operate mobile equipment only from the driver's seat.
- Always put the transmission in park or neutral and set the brakes before starting.
- Install and maintain any labels warning against jump-starting.
- Do not remove starter solenoid shields that prevent jump-starting.

