

3 Crushed By/Caught In—Insp # 1736779 Patten Seed Company LLC DBA Super Sod

A 33-year-old male employee was crushed by the mast of a Load Lifter 2400-G rough terrain forklift while collecting and transporting pallets of sod. The victim was engaged in the operation of retrieving and staging for shipment pallets of sod that had been loaded by a second employee (cutter/operator) assigned to cut patches of sod and load them onto the pallet.

The fatality occurred at approximately 8:00 am (Eastern Time). The cutter/operator was making passes through the field, cutting, and palletizing the sod and noticed that the victim had stopped the Load Lifter 2400-G rough terrain forklift. In making a turn, the cutter operator came directly behind the forklift that the victim was operating and discovered the victim standing upright on the dash of the forklift with his chest and upper torso pinned between the mast and cab of the forklift with the forklift still running, and with the forks and load lowered.

During interviews it was learned that over the previous 3 weeks there had been an issue with a hydraulic hose located within the structure of the mast coming free of the pulley used to position the hose. It was stated that this happened approximately twice a week and was caused by the bouncing and shaking of the forklift as it traveled. No training or procedure for reseating the hose had been conducted or established.

The control levers for the forks were located within inches of the mast.

It is believed the victim partially exited the vehicle and was attempting to reposition the hose, inadvertently making contact with the control levers causing the mast to tilt in a manner that pinned the employee between the cab and the mast.

Citation(s) as Originally Issued

A complete inspection was conducted at the accident scene. Some of the items cited may not directly relate to the fatality.

Citation 1 Item 1 **Type of Violation: Serious** **\$4500**

TCA 50-3-105(1): The employer did not furnish employment and a place of employment which were free from recognized hazards that were causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.

In that the Load Lifter 2400-G rough terrain forklift was not turned off or deenergized prior to an employee adjusting the hydraulic line while positioned between the mast and cab of the forklift, the mast tilted backwards, pinning the employee, resulting in a fatality.

