

28 Struck by wheel loader – Inspection #1186869

A **59 year old male** employee was fatally injured when he was struck by a John Deere 544K wheel loader. On the day of the incident, the victim was picking up loose, stray bits of cotton at the north end a paved drive located between the office building and gin building. At the same time, an operator of a wheel loader using a four-tine bale spear attachment was transporting an 8-foot diameter, cylindrical shaped, bale of cotton to the feeder of the gin. The loader was being operated in the forward direction. Due to the cylindrical shape of the cotton bale, the wheel loader's forward visibility was limited 45-50%. The operator traveled through the staging yard, looking to his left and right down the paved drive before turning, and then on to the feeder inlet located at the north end of the gin building. As the operator was lining up the bale of cotton with the feeder inlet, he felt a bump. A witness stated that he yelled out to the victim to watch out for the wheel loader but he was struck by the bail of cotton then by the loader. During the investigation it was determined the operator had not received training in the operation of the John Deere 544K wheel loader, and no one was trained in first-aid on site. A citation was not issued for the lack of first-aid providers because agricultural standards, Title 29, Part 1928, do not require a person, or persons, to be trained in first aid. It is undetermined if prompt administration of first-aid could have saved the victim.

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

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 employees were exposed to. In that an employee was struck by a John Deere 544K wheel loader that was driven by an untrained operator while in the process of transporting a round cotton bale from the bale staging yard to the cotton gin's feeder. Among other methods, one feasible and acceptable method to correct this hazard is to train all John Deere 544K wheel loader operators to safely operate the wheel loader in and around the cotton gin.
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Citation 2 Item 1a

29 CFR 1910.1200(e)(1)	The employer did not develop, implement, and/or maintain at the workplace a written hazard communication program which describes how the criteria specified in 29 CFR 1910.1200(f), (g), and (h) will be met. In that the employer did not have a written Hazard Communication program for the materials being used by the employees, such as diesel fuel that contains naphthalene.
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Citation 2 Item 1b

29 CFR 1910.1200(g)(1)	Employers did not have a safety data sheet in the workplace for each hazardous chemical which they use. In that the employer did not have a safety data sheet for the materials being used by employees, such as diesel fuel that contains naphthalene.
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Citation 2 Item 1c

29 CFR 1910.1200(h)(1)	Employees were not provided effective information and training on hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment and whenever a new hazard that the employees had not been previously trained about was introduced into their work area. In that the employer did not provide the employees with information and training for the materials being used by employees, such as diesel fuel that contains naphthalene.
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Photo 1 of 1 – View from the operator’s seat of the John Deere 544K wheel loader with a round bale of cotton loaded on the four-tine bale spear.