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Struck By & Caught Between Training

Instructor -- Chris Jenkins

Division -- Seattle

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Job Name -- Open window

Foreman -- Travis Wenrick

Attendance -- Travis Wenrick, Chris Jenkins

Comments:

Let's talk is about two hazards that can take you out of the game fast: :Struck-by: (getting hit by vehicles, equipment, or falling objects) and :Caught-between: (being crushed, pinned, or trapped between objects or machinery). We'll also touch on mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs), because those are everywhere on site and bring their own struck-by/Caught-between risks.

Struck-by incidents are the 2nd leading cause of death in construction and the leading cause of non-fatal injuries in the trades. About **half of struck-by fatalities** are struck by vehicles on site.

Caught-in/caught-between events are less common than falls but still deadly : they're part of OSHA's :Focus Four: and account for a meaningful share of construction deaths and serious injuries.

For MEWPs (aerial lifts/boom lifts/scissor lifts): historically the industry averages **roughly 20:30 fatalities a year** related to aerial lifts in worldwide/U.S. studies, and MEWPs are involved in serious struck-by and tip-over events when used improperly. Treat them like any heavy equipment : they can injure people on the ground and the platform occupants.

Let's talk about real-life scenarios

:Who's worked around excavators, dump trucks, or MEWP's this week::

:Okay, imagine a lift operator swings a boom while someone is stepping behind the machine. Or a platform operator drops a wrench, and it hits the person below. Or a worker gets pinned between a trailer and a compacting plate, those moments happen in seconds.:

Most struck-by / caught-between incidents are avoidable with planning, communication, and simple controls.

Common ways these incidents happen

Ground workers are struck by reversing vehicles or equipment (with no spotters, and blind spots).

Workers are struck by falling tools and materials from MEWP platforms.

Being caught between a moving piece of equipment and a fixed object (or a trench wall collapse).

Getting pulled into rotating machinery or compressed between objects during material handling.

Controls that work (what we can do on site)

Plan & separate

Set up vehicle and equipment travel routes and **pedestrian exclusion zones**. Keep foot traffic out of equipment corridors. Use cones, barriers, and signage.

Use a spotter & positive communication

Every time a vehicle reverses or a lift is positioned near people, a trained spotter communicates with the operator (radio/hand signals). No spotter = no movement.

Establish overhead work protocols for MEWPs

Tools tethered to the platform, toe boards/mesh where possible, and a controlled access zone (CAZ) under the platform. Wear appropriate fall protection and be trained on the specific MEWP type.

PPE is last line of defense

Hard hats, hi-vis, safety boots, hand and eye protection, but PPE doesn't replace planning and controls.

MEWP-specific reminders

Only trained, authorized operators may operate a MEWP.

Perform and document a pre-use inspection, every shift.

Never overload the platform or use ladders/boxes on a platform. Tools and materials must be secure.

Be aware of swing radius, pinch points, and the possibility of a platform hitting ground workers. Keep the area below clear.

What to do if you see a hazard

Stop work if someone is in immediate danger.

Control traffic or movement (ask operator to stop).

Report to your supervisor immediately and complete a near-miss/incident report so we can fix the root cause.

Name one potential struck-by or caught-between hazards you see on site and one action we'll take to control it.

Remember This!

Statistics we talk about are not just numbers; they're people like us. A small action like using a spotter, or clearing the ground under a lift, or securing a tool can prevent a life-changing injury.