

Safety Alert

Issue # 04-2026

ENERGY
SAFETY
CANADA

Excavator Impalement – Life-Altering Injury

What Happened?

A worker was performing routine maintenance on an excavator at a worksite. Weather and site conditions were good, ruling out environmental factors as a contributor. The worker was standing on a built-in equipment platform on the excavator while completing the maintenance task.

The worker lost their balance and fell from the platform, contacted the excavator mirror mount/bracket, and then fell to the ground, resulting in a serious, life-altering abdominal injury.



Fig 1: Platform on excavator.



Fig 2: Mirror mount worker contacted.

Why Did it Happen?

The excavator is newer equipment, fitted with cameras that have replaced the need for a conventional mirror. With the mirror no longer needed, and now acting as a visual obstruction, it had been removed. However, the mounting bracket was left in place with its post oriented upward, at the platform's edge. The worker contacted the bracket during the fall.

What Did They Learn?

- When equipment is altered, even something as seemingly minor as removing a mirror, the change needs to be assessed for any new risk it introduces.
- Hazard awareness can't be limited to a point-in-time, task-specific assessment. Crews need to maintain ongoing awareness of their surroundings and equipment, continually noticing and mitigating risks as conditions change, not only when a formal hazard assessment is triggered.
- In this case, the hazard had likely existed for some time, and familiarity with the equipment appears to have played a role in it going unaddressed.

Ask Yourself and Your Crew

- Is there a piece of equipment or a condition in your operations that no longer makes sense, or is a leftover from something no longer in use? Ask your workers.
- How are you managing change to equipment in your operations?
- Are you involving frontline workers, like equipment operators, when you assess the impacts of change?

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Resources

- [The Energy Wheel](#)
- [The Scramble | Solving Problems with the 4Ds](#)
- [SIF Prevention](#)

Submit Your Safety Alert

Help industry by sharing lessons learned from an incident. [Submit your Safety Alert.](#)

Share and Collaborate

Energy Safety Canada (ESC) works collaboratively with industry to share information aimed at helping companies of all sizes improve safe work performance.

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