

COULD THIS HAVE BEEN YOU?

Driver Drowns As Machine Burns

A heavy equipment operator drowned when his machine crashed and caught fire in a pit which had a small amount of water in the bottom.

He was operating a front end loader near the edge of an excavation. The sandy soil collapsed, and the machine cartwheeled to the bottom of the excavation, pinning the driver underneath. He was lying face down in the water at the bottom of the excavation. There was no gasoline cap on the machine, and fuel spilled during the incident. It caught fire. Rescuers were unable to reach the driver because of the fire, and he died of drowning.

Don't operate a vehicle without a gasoline cap – not even your own automobile. A fire extinguisher must be readily available any time you operate motorized equipment. The operator must be protected by a seat belt and a rollover protection canopy on equipment such as this. Observe all safety precautions around excavations, including tests for soil stability and setback guidelines for material storage.

Seeping water causes cave-in

An unusual mishap occurred when the ground gave way outside of an excavation, burying and killing a worker.

The worker had just climbed out of the excavation, which was properly shored up to prevent it from collapsing. He was standing outside the excavation when the ground caved in, burying him.

The ground outside the excavation had been weakened by water seeping underground, possibly from a hydrant up the street or from a broken underground pipe. The crew working on the excavation had been required to pump water out of the excavation each morning before starting work.

Excavations are dangerous places. Expert advice is required to ensure safety when conditions change, such as the presence of groundwater on the site. While you may not work around excavations, chances are you encounter them in daily life – around street repair projects and home construction. Observe warning signs and barricades because the possibility of a cave-in is always there. And always communicate safety concerns to your supervisor and co-workers.