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Naval Facilities Engineering Command

Abstract of an Accident

96-4

ACCIDENT TYPE:	Equipment/Materials Handling
INJURY:	Fractured Legs
TYPE OF WORK:	Waterfront/Marine Operations
EQUIPMENT:	1845 Case (Bobcat type) Uni-Loader (\$1,170.00 in Damage)
SAFETY EQUIPMENT:	Personal Floatation Device/Hard-Hat/Safety Glasses

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT:

An employee was injured while operating a small loader on a wooden pier. The employee was using the loader to manipulate several long timber pier structural members. While making a sharp turn on the pier the loader back end rose off the driving surface. The operator tried to right the equipment by quickly adjusting the controls but instead engaged the travel forward mechanism causing the loader to go forward abruptly. The operator was unable to respond quickly enough to regain control and the loader went over the side of the pier into 17 feet of water. During the fall the operator's legs came out of the equipment and became caught between the loader frame and the 14" pier edge curb breaking his legs. The operator was able to climb out of the loader once on the bottom and swim to the surface.

DIRECT CAUSE:

An error was made in estimating the weight of the saturated wooden structural timbers being handled and the weight limitation of the equipment causing the equipment to tip forward.

CONTRIBUTING CAUSES:

- An error was made when the operator tried to adjust the controls to correct the tipped loader.
- The operator had on the job training but no formal training.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Contractors must review training/experience of operators during Activity Hazard Analysis review with employees.
- Equipment weight handling limitations and load charts must be clearly understood by operators of this type of equipment. Small equipment is just as hazardous as large material handling equipment.

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