

SAFETY NOTES

Department of Consumer & Business Services
Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Division
Salem, OR 97301-3882

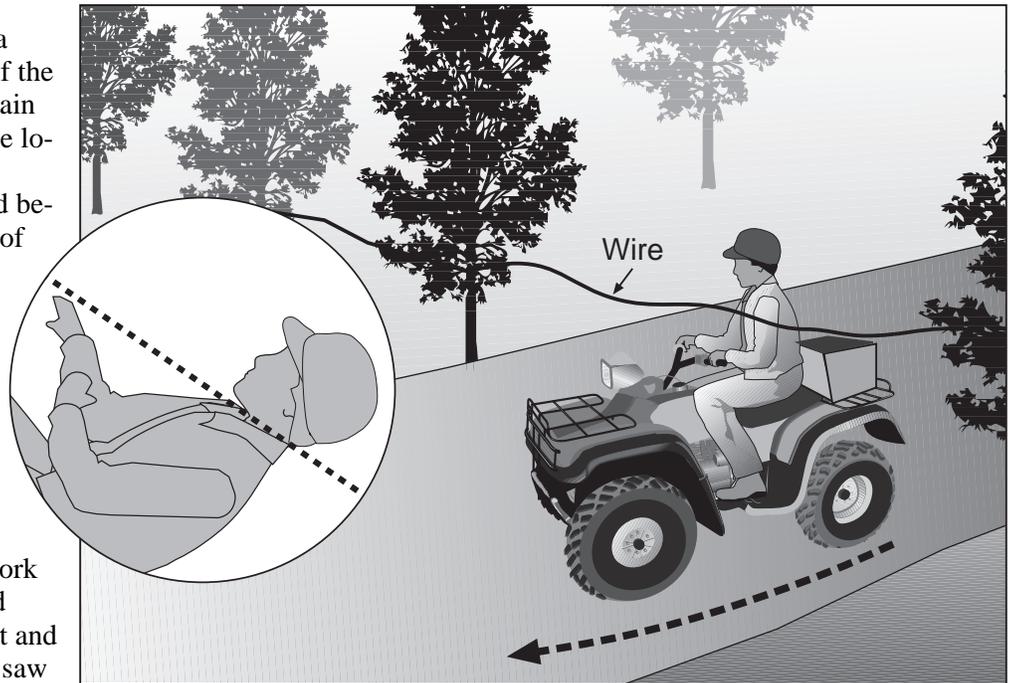
Fatality Report

Accident type Laceration to throat
Industry Farming
Employee job title Laborer

Accident description

The victim was employed by a tree fruit business. At the time of the accident he was using an all terrain vehicle (ATV) to travel from one location to another on the farm.

The victim entered the orchard between the third and fourth rows of trees to the north of the agricultural labor housing (ALH). He was observed moving east at a moderate speed. Just east of the ALH, he cut across two rows of trees and approached his supervisor, who was mowing between the first and second rows of trees. After a brief discussion about work issues, he mounted the ATV and proceeded west between the first and second rows of trees. A witness saw the victim pass by the ALH. As the



victim passed out of sight, the witness and others heard a loud bang. As they approached the location of the sound they found the victim lying on the ground and the ATV farther down the dirt drive.

As the victim left the orchard he had struck a 3/8 inch wire cable that was strung between the first tree in the first row and the first tree in the third row at the north end of the orchard. The impact lacerated the victim's throat, broke his neck, and knocked him off the ATV.

Upon being notified, the supervisor drove to the accident site and began administering first aid immediately. He then ran to his house nearby and instructed his wife to call 911. He returned to the victim and attempted to stop the flow of blood from his neck with a towel. EMTs arrived and began advanced life-support procedures. He was transported to the hospital and pronounced dead shortly thereafter. The victim died from brain anoxia due to the laceration and disruption of blood flow to the brain.

Investigation findings

The employer had strung the wire cable to prevent vehicles from entering the north end of the orchard. At the time of the accident the cable had two strips of colored ribbon tied to it on the section between the second and third rows of trees, but the section between the first and second rows was not marked. The wire cable was occasionally removed in order to allow farm equipment in for harvesting, spraying, and other orchard maintenance. The size of the cable and the direction in which the victim was traveling (with the sun in his eyes) made the cable almost impossible to see.

The employer was cited for erecting a cable across a travel route without adequate marking or signage or maintaining the cable in a clearly visible manner.

Applicable standards

ORS 6541.010