

Hazard Alert

Remotely Controlled Equipment Date of Issue: December 17th, 2007

Hazard Summary

A remote control unit lets you control machinery from a distance. Some units attach to the machine with a cord, allowing some freedom of movement. Others are cordless and allow almost any movement.

It is important to use the remote control units and the machines for their intended purpose and follow the manufacturer's directions. You should also realize that a remote control unit may break or there may be a delay between using the remote control and movement of the machine.

Recently, an operator cut off a finger while using a remote control unit on a boom truck.

The accident happened when the employee noticed that the boom was not extending. He tried to press the emergency stop switch. While looking down at the remote control to find the switch, the boom suddenly moved. The employee's finger was trapped between the boom and the load and cut off.

Preventive Measures

The Department of the Environment and Labour reminds everyone that:

- you must follow the manufacturer's instructions when using any equipment
- you need proper training before using any equipment.

The Department also recommends that:

- you use a safe work procedure to make sure no one is struck by the equipment
- equipment be checked before each use
- a regular maintenance and inspection program be used
- remotely-controlled equipment be designed so that it cannot start by mistake
- a remote control unit only be able to control one piece of equipment at a time.

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Applicable Laws

OHS Act

Employer general duty:

13 (1) Every employer shall take every precaution that is reasonable in the circumstances to:

- (a) ensure the health and safety of persons at or near the workplace;
- (b) provide and maintain equipment, machines, materials or things that are properly equipped with safety devices;
- (c) provide such information, instruction, training, supervision and facilities as are necessary to the health or safety of the employees;
- (e) ensure that the employees are made familiar with the proper use of all devices, equipment and clothing required for their protection.

Employee precautions and duty:

17 (1) Every employee, while at work, shall

- (a) take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to protect the employee's own health and safety and that of other persons at or near the workplace;
- (b) co-operate with the employer and with the employee's fellow employees to protect the employee's own health and safety and that of other persons at or near the workplace.

Occupational Safety General Regulations

84 (1) An employer shall ensure that a machine that may be a hazard to the health or safety of a person at the workplace is erected, installed, assembled, started, operated, used, handled, stored, stopped, inspected, serviced, tested, cleaned, adjusted, maintained, repaired and dismantled in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications, or, where there are no manufacturer's specifications, the specifications certified by an engineer.