



**DEPARTMENT OF MINERALS AND ENERGY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT REPORT NO. 38

**UNCONTROLLED MOVEMENT OF MOBILE UNIT DURING
MAINTENANCE**

INCIDENT

A maintenance person was carrying out repairs to the exhaust system of a backhoe. At the completion of the repairs he started the engine of the backhoe whilst leaning into the unit. The transmission of the unit was engaged and the backhoe moved forward running over him causing very serious injuries.

CAUSE

The primary cause of this accident was the failure of the maintenance person to have proper control of the backhoe whilst starting the engine.

COMMENTS AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION

This type of accident has resulted in two fatalities in recent years. It is an extremely hazardous practice to start engines on mobile equipment without having full control of that equipment.

All persons involved in the repairs and maintenance of mobile equipment must be aware that before starting the engine of any mobile unit they must ensure as a minimum that:-

- No person could be placed in danger by the starting or movement of the unit.
- No danger or other tags are attached to the unit.
- The person about to start the engine is properly seated at the controls.
- The parkbrake is fully applied.
- The unit's transmission is not engaged, (by checking the gear-shift lever or depressing the clutch pedal or both), and all function controls are in the neutral position.

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