

FATALITY ALERT

– PRELIMINARY INFORMATION –

BCFSC #2025-06-04

On June 4th, an equipment operator drowned after being trapped in the cab of a piece of heavy equipment that fell into the ocean. This incident occurred at a pulp mill on Vancouver Island. WorkSafeBC and the Coroners Service are currently investigating this incident.

We extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of the deceased and offer our sympathies to all those affected by this tragedy.

This incident is under investigation and details are still to be determined. Contributing factors to the incident are not available during an ongoing investigation.

Consider the following safety points:

1. Working near water presents a high-risk situation that can be overlooked. Hazardous water environments include working near the ocean or lakes but even water filled ditches or fast flowing streams can create problems. Make sure your safety program, including the Emergency Response Plan (ERP), adequately manages the risks of working near water.
2. Conduct regular inspections on escape hatches for equipment cabs to ensure they easily open during an emergency. Practice using hatches during drills as this can uncover problems before there is an actual emergency. Simulate challenging situations where an escape hatch or door might be blocked or site conditions such as steep terrain or water might make escape difficult.
3. A good risk assessment process is very important when working near water. Ask “what could go wrong?” and implement controls to reduce the risks.
4. [Part 24 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation](#) provides guidance on what is required when heavy equipment works near water. The regulation specifies:
 - A curb or bullrail must be installed along the open sides of each float, dock, wharf, pier and similar other area where mobile equipment might be used.
 - Each curb and bullrail must be of substantial construction and be at least 25 cm (10 in) high.

Resources:

- [Video - ERP: Equipment Rollover and Operator Extraction Procedure](#)
- [Fatality Alert – Log Truck Submerged in Water Filled Ditch](#)