

FATAL ALERT

April 9, 2007

On Monday April 9, 2007, at approximately 11:00 am, a Peruvian sheepherder received fatal injuries when he was thrown from the all-terrain vehicle (ATV) he was operating. At the time of the accident, the sheepherder was operating the ATV solo and on completely flat terrain. No one witnessed the accident. The sheepherder was operating the ATV at a rate of speed too high to safely maneuver the vehicle, either through a turn or a turning stop. The maneuver caused him to be thrown from the vehicle and the ATV to roll over him.

Earlier in the day, a cow had gotten into a field where it did not belong. The rancher had directed a Peruvian ranch hand to gather a couple of horses and the rancher would help him round up the cow from horseback. Rather than follow directions, the ranch hand and a Peruvian sheepherder took the ATV to try to round up the cow. They rode double on the ATV to the field where the cow was located.

The ranch hand decided to run through the willows to herd the cow towards the gate. He directed the sheepherder to ride the ATV back to open the gate. The ranch hand assumed the sheepherder had experience operating an ATV. The investigation revealed the sheepherder's normal job duties were performed from horseback. He had received no training in the operation of the ATV.

Significant Factors

- No training had been provided for employees authorized to operate the ATV
- The employer had no policy prohibiting employees who had not been trained from using/operating machinery or equipment
- No personal protective equipment (helmets) was used/worn by the employees operating the ATV

Recommendations

- All employees should be briefed on the facts and circumstances of this fatal accident
- Employer needs to provide training on the safe operation of the ATV to any employee authorized to operate it
- Employer needs to implement a policy that if an employee has not been trained on a piece of equipment, they are not to use/operate it
- Employer needs to make it a policy that employees wear a helmet when operating the ATV