

FATAL ALERT

July 12, 2005

A staking crew consisting of two individuals, a staking manager and a staking technician were working to mark power transmission line installation routes across open ranch land some 25 miles from the nearest town. The crew was using 4 wheeled all terrain vehicles (ATV) to travel from one staking location to the next. The two workers had ridden through the area the day before the accident and had been riding in similar environments for about 2.5 months.

The staking manager had just finished placing a stake to mark a location for one of the power poles and was going to look for another section marker (brass cap), while the staking technician was moving to the next position he needed to survey from. The technician's route of travel was through an area the staking manager had traveled through earlier. The staking managers route of travel was not always obvious.

While the staking technician was attempting to traverse a down hill slope he encountered a 2 foot drop off. The rider lost control of the ATV as the front tires of the vehicle dropped down the drop off. The rider was thrown over the front of the ATV and was then struck by the ATV. The staking manager was close enough to hear the crash and came to investigate. He found the injured rider lying under the ATV. He lifted the ATV off the injured co-worker and attempted to provide first aid before leaving to call for help. The injured rider suffered a fractured skull and died as a result of his injuries.

Significant Factors:

- The rider had an unknown amount of ATV riding experience
- The rider was not familiar with the area he was riding in
- The company discouraged any work/activities that were not billable, i.e., training is not billable
- The rider had received only 15-minutes of safety training in the form of a video
- The ATV was not designed to safely negotiate the drop off or the grade associated with the drop off area
- The rider was provided with a safety helmet but was not wearing one at the time of the accident
- There was no one on site with current first aid training

Recommendations:

- Brief all employees on the facts and circumstances of this fatal mishap
- Place more importance on safety training regardless of whether it is billable
- Train all ATV operators to ensure they understand the limitations of the ATV's
- Ensure employees adhere to manufacturers guidance relating to ATV limitations
- Ensure all ATV operators wear the recommend personal protective equipment
- Ensure there is always a current first aid trained worker on remote sites
- Ensure there is always adequate first aid supplies available on remote sites