

Fatal Alert

On September 20, 2016 at approximately 10:15 AM a four person crew was installing water and sewer lines, and placing precast concrete manholes for a large commercial construction site. Two crew members were in an excavation, where a precast concrete manhole was being placed. The base section of the manhole had been set, and the mid-section was ready to be lowered. A third crew member operated the excavator lowering the manhole mid-section with a specialty lifting devise that was custom made for this particular precast concrete product. The forth crew member served as the 'top man', and was tasked with connecting the concrete manhole sections on the excavator rigging so they can be lifted and lowered, along with other miscellaneous tasks to assist the employees in the excavation.

The excavation was approximately 11 feet deep with benching attempted. The mid-section was lifted slightly by the excavator, and in the process of being lowered into the excavation. At approximately 10:30 AM one side of the concrete mid-section broke free from the lifting device, swung and hit the wall of the excavation, disconnected completely from the device, fell onto the manhole base section, and rolled, striking one of the crew members and coming to rest at the bottom of the excavation. The Crew member struck by the material died.

Significant Factors

- The Lifting devise's rating information was not visible on the device.
- Employees were permitted to work under a suspended load handled by lifting equipment.
- The Competent person inadequately addressed a hazardous condition.
- Inadequate cave-in protective was used for excavation soil type.

Recommendations

- Brief all employees on the facts and circumstances of this fatal mishap.
- Train/Retrain employees on hazards associated with the fatality.
- Do not allow employees to work under a load handled by lifting or digging equipment, to avoid exposure to a struck-by hazard.
- Ensure lifting equipment is marked with it load rating so the safe working load of lifting devices is available and understood.
- Ensure adequate cave-in protective systems are used in excavations.