

**Preliminary Findings into the
July 13, 2009 Crush Injury
Near the Whitehorse Sewage Lagoon**

PURPOSE:

These initial findings are being released to provide information into the direct causes of this serious injury. It is hoped that providing this information will encourage others to review these causes and examine their own workplaces to ensure similar conditions either do not exist or, if they do, are immediately corrected.

INTRODUCTION:

On July 13, 2009 a worker was operating an auguring machine, he was in the process of removing the spoil pile from a 36 inch pipe (casing) using a 20 inch auger. During this "cleanout" operation, the worker was operating the auguring machine in high gear at high RPM.

A safety guard on the auger had been removed and the equipment was not being operated to manufacturers specifications.

The auger bit jammed, resulting in the torque being transferred back to the auguring machine. The machine tipped to the left, pinning the worker against the tracks of an excavator (hoe) that had been stationed approximately 4 feet away.

The worker controlled the speed and direction of the auger by the use of a trigger equipped "joy stick". When the worker was crushed between the auger machine and the hoe he released the trigger and power was discontinued. The machine stalled and fell back to the operating position releasing the operator.

The worker suffered serious internal injuries as a result of being crushed.

DIRECT CAUSES:

Preliminary findings indicate that the direct causes of this serious injury arose from the auguring machine being improperly secured in place during the clean out procedure. The auger being used was undersized, which allowed material to jam between the auger and the casing wall. The machine was being operated at a speed that allowed the torque to transfer back to the auguring machine rather than stalling it out.

All of these combined to cause the auguring machine to tip over onto the operator, where he was pinned and crushed between the machine he was operating and another piece of equipment.

PREVENTION:

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board reminds all employers that they are required to provide workers with safe work procedures for all critical tasks. Workplace parties must ensure the equipment they are operating is in sound mechanical condition and prior to operating equipment, operators must review critical procedures and test critical systems.

All machinery must be operated according to manufacturer recommendations and with all safety guards in place.

Workplace procedures should be discussed with all staff prior to beginning the days work and performance expectations established. When an unsafe act or condition exists in the workplace correct it immediately or report it immediately to your supervisor.