

Health and safety alert

For all Alliances

Issue No: HS0047

Date: 19/06/2026

Fractured foot caused by entrapment during excavator overturn incident

What happened

On 18 June, a 3-tonne tracked excavator was being moved across an excavation using road plates. While repositioning, the operator slewed and tracked at the same time. The rear of the left track was not fully supported by the road plate and dropped into the open excavation. This caused the excavator to become unstable and overturn onto its side. As it overturned, the operator attempted to jump clear. His foot became trapped under the machine, resulting in a significant injury. A second excavator was used to lift the machine and release him.



Immediate findings

Poor change management - the excavation width changed during the work, increasing from 500 mm to 820 mm. The internal track measurement of the excavator was 900 mm.

Unmanaged movement - no banksman was present during the manoeuvre.

Loss of stability - the tracks were not fully supported by the road plates.

Combined movements - tracking and slewing at the same time increased momentum and instability.

Operator attempted to exit during the overturn - this led to entrapment. The operative was not wearing the seat belt correctly.

Unsuitable RAMS - the assessment did not identify the excavation width or specify the excavation type and size.

Procedure inadequacy - No Are We Safe and Well check was completed for the work that day.

What you need to know and do...

- Excavators are not designed to travel over partially supported ground.
- Road plates must fully support the tracks, not just part of the machine.
- Combining movements, such as slewing and tracking, can increase the risk of overturn.
- Operators are safest inside the cab during an overturn when the seat belt is worn correctly.
- Seat belts must be worn at all times when operating plant.

Plan plant movements properly

- Avoid crossing excavations where possible.
- Use engineered solutions where crossings are required.

Ensure full support under tracks

- Road plates must be correctly sized and positioned.
- Do not partially load the tracks.

Control machine movements

- Avoid slewing and tracking at the same time unless it has been planned and confirmed safe.
- Keep attachments within a safe working envelope.

Strengthen operator behaviours

- Always wear seat belts correctly.
- Do not attempt to jump clear during instability or an overturn.

Review RAMS and brief teams

- Include ground conditions, excavation dimensions, and temporary works requirements.
- Highlight the risk of overturning and unsafe crossings.

Supervision and challenge

- Stop work if the set-up looks unstable.
- Intervene early if unsafe positioning or movements are seen.

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