

Please report all accidents and near misses. Things happen and it is important to learn from others. Environmental Health and Safety and your colleagues appreciate hearing about incidents, reviewing their causes and learning from them.

ROLLOVER PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES (ROPS)

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, fatal incidents involving riding mowers have several common patterns: the machine tips over, the victim falls under or is run over by the machine, or the victim is thrown from or falls off the machine. The installation and proper use of rollover protective structures (ROPS) can prevent these tragedies. ROPS are cabs, frames or bars that provide protection to equipment operators in the event of a rollover and require the use of a seatbelt.

What Happened?

In September 2021, a worker was operating a zero-turn mower on a flat area near a slope when it lost traction, proceeded down the slope and collided with a tree. The worker was ejected out of the mower seat and suffered injuries resulting from the fall.

What Went Right?

The injured worker called a co-worker for help and 911 was called.

What Should Have Been Done Differently?

A buffer was needed from identified hazards such as slopes. The mower's ROPS should have been used with the seatbelt.

What Corrective Actions Have Been Taken?

Operators and their supervisors were reminded about ROPS general safety facts and advised to review manufacturer's instructions.

How Can Incidents Like This Be Prevented?

Know and follow equipment manufacturer instructions. In general, manufacturers recommend:

- Provide a buffer from hazards (such as slopes) by at least the width of the mower.
- Use seatbelts on equipment with ROPS.
- If equipped with folding ROPS, place it in the upright position before starting work. Only lower the ROPS for short durations and when required in low clearance areas. When lowered, do not use the seatbelt and drive slowly. The ROPS must be returned to the upright position as soon as possible.
- Know the equipment's limitations regarding slope usage. Typically, this is no more than 15 degrees.
- Avoid all slopes that are wet from rain or watering.

More Information

- WorkSafeBC Tractor Accidents: Three Crushed in Tractor Rollovers – <https://bit.ly/3CDM0mL>
- WorkSafeBC Out-of-Control Mower Strikes Worker – <https://bit.ly/3nTV9kK>
- OSHA Dangers of Roll-Overs of Riding Mowers – <https://bit.ly/3GUR5K7>
- Consumer Product Safety Commission Fact Sheet – <https://bit.ly/3mym7ix>
- Toro Zero Turn Mower Safety Tips – <https://bit.ly/2ZHWS4o>
- John Deere Preventing Rollovers – <https://bit.ly/3jZbJPe>
- Exmark Zero Turn Safety Tips – <https://bit.ly/3nSv1qt>

