Laborer Whipped With Hydraulic Hose



A 32-year-old laborer for a boring and tunneling company died when he was struck with a hydraulic hose.

The victim was part of a work crew digging a tunnel and inserting a 54-inch (1.4-meter) casing. They were using two hydraulic jacks, laid horizontally and connected by hydraulic lines. The jacks, which were each marked to withstand 3,500 psi (pounds per square inch), were used to push the pipe into the tunnel one section at a time. The man was standing next to the jack. The male end of the coupling split in half and the female end flew up and struck the victim. He died of a puncture wound to the abdomen.

Inspectors made three recommendations workers should follow to prevent this kind of accident:

- Install straps (whip checks) to the hydraulic hose at the point where the hose is connected. This will limit the distance the hose can travel if it lets go.
- Workers should not stand adjacent to hydraulic hose connections when hydraulic pressure is initially applied.
- Relief valves must be set to not exceed the maximum pressure recommended by manufacturer of couplings, hoses or other equipment. In this incident, the pressure valve was set to 6,500 psi.