MNM Fatal 2012-07

- Machinery Accident
- May 23, 2012 (Oklahoma)
- Sand & Gravel Operation
- Foreman
- 36 years old
- 9 years of experience

Overview

The victim was killed when the excavator he was operating overturned on a dike between two ponds. The ground beneath the excavator tracks failed and the excavator toppled into one of the ponds.

The accident occurred due to management's failure to maintain safe access to the area where the victim intended to operate the excavator. Water had eroded the sandy soil dike on which the excavator operated causing the dike to fail under the weight of the excavator.

Root Cause

***Root Cause*:** Management failed to maintain safe access to the area where the foreman intended to operate the excavator.

***Corrective Action*:** Safe access was provided by constructing an earthen ramp that was sufficient to support the weight of the excavator. Future excavator work will occur only after the work site has been inspected and safe access has been provided.

Best Practices

- Examine work areas to identify all hazards and remediate before starting any work.
- Evaluate the stability of the ground (slopes and berms) prior to operating equipment near any drop off or edge.
- Always be attentive to changes in ground conditions and visibility when operating machinery.
- Perform the work at a safe distance away from the edge of a pond or where the stability of the ground may be unknown.
- If a potential hazard is present, use long reach equipment to limit exposure and maintain a safe distance away.
- Consider areas that have experienced previous slope failures to be unstable and do not approach until the area is evaluated for stability.
- Wear flotation devices where there is a danger of falling into water.
- Be alert to changes in ground conditions such as cracking, bulging, sloughing, undercutting, and erosion.