

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Surface
Common Sand

Powered Haulage
June 24, 2019

Northwest Crane Service, LLC. (D581)
at
Dolese Bros. Co.
East Sand Plant
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
ID No. 34-02056

Accident Investigators

Laurence Dunlap, Lead Investigator
Supervisory Mine Safety and Health Inspector

James Meadow
Mine Safety and Health Inspector

Originating Office

Mine Safety and Health Administration
South Central District
1100 Commerce Street RM 462
Dallas, TX 75242
William D. O'Dell, District Manager

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW	1
GENERAL INFORMATION.....	2
DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT	2
INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENT	3
DISCUSSION.....	3
Location of Accident	3
Weather.....	3
Equipment Involved in the Accident	3
Training and Experience.....	4
ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS.....	4
CONCLUSION.....	4
ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS.....	5
Appendix A - Persons Participating in the Investigation.....	6
Appendix B - Map of the Accident Site	7



OVERVIEW

Neil P. Witte, a 34-year-old contract Crane Operator with Northwest Crane Services, LLC (Northwest), with 11 years total mining experience, died on June 24, 2019, while assisting in the removal of a rigging truck stuck in the sand. The victim approached the moving truck and was fatally injured when he was crushed by the truck's tires.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Dolese Bros. Co. (Dolese) owns and operates the East Sand Plant in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The East Sand Plant operates varying shifts five to seven days a week and employs five miners. East Sand Plant uses a dredge to mine sand and pumps the sand to a plant for screening and classification. The finished products are placed in stockpiles for commerce. Brandon Wells, Superintendent for Dolese, was on site when the accident occurred.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) completed the last regular inspection at this operation on May 9, 2019. The non-fatal days lost (NFDL) incident rate for the East Sand Plant for 2018 was zero, compared to the national average of 1.16.

The principal officers for this mine at the time of the accident were:

Mark A Helm.....President
Steven M Bowen Vice President and COO
William Schlittler CFO/Treasurer

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

On June 24, 2019, at 7:00 a.m., Northwest employees Witte; Madison McDonald, Crane Operator; Charles Morgan, Rigger; Alan Ventris, Rigger; and Travis Vowell, Field Supervisor, arrived at the mine site. Dolese contracted Northwest to remove a dredge from a pond at East Sand Plant and relocate it to another Dolese property. Northwest utilized two Liebherr all-terrain cranes to remove the dredge; one crane was a 120-ton and the other was a 300-ton. Northwest safely removed the dredge from the pond, loaded it onto a truck and transported the dredge off the mine site.

Upon removal of the dredge, Northwest employees prepared to move their equipment from the mine site. They removed counter weights, spreader bars, steel pads, and other rigging materials from each crane and put them on two rigging trucks.

Around 2:00 p.m., Ventris attempted to drive the first rigging truck out of the work area with a load of materials from the 120-ton crane, but it became stuck in the sand. Dolese provided a Caterpillar D6R bulldozer and operator Jason Wise, Leadman, to assist in pulling out the rigging truck. Witte and McDonald attached the rigging truck to the bulldozer with a 1-3/8-inch towing cable measuring 35-feet long. Wise towed the rigging truck up an incline to solid ground, McDonald disconnected the cable and Ventris parked the first rigging truck.

Morgan operated the second rigging truck loaded with equipment from the 300-ton crane. Witte and McDonald assisted in connecting the tow cable from the bulldozer to the rigging truck. The miners were unable to communicate by radio and relied on hand signals only. Witte flagged the bulldozer operator and the rigging truck operator until the cable became taut between the two pieces of equipment. McDonald returned to the 120-ton crane, which was parked nearby, to drive it out behind the rigging truck. The bulldozer began to tow the rigging truck up the incline. The victim was walking parallel with the truck approximately 20 feet away, according to

Morgan. After the rigging truck traveled approximately 30 feet, Morgan saw Witte walking toward the driver side of the truck, approaching within five feet. That was the last time anyone saw Witte until McDonald observed him lying on the ground. The victim was run over after he approached the side of the rigging truck's cab as the truck was being pulled. McDonald called over his radio to Morgan to stop the tow and Morgan hand signaled for Wise to stop. Alliance Health Midwest ambulance arrived on site at approximately 3:30 p.m. Ryan Weaver, Primary Patient Caregiver, documented upon arrival that the victim was deceased.

INVESTIGATION OF ACCIDENT

At 3:37 p.m., Wise called the Department of Labor National Contact Center (DOLNCC). At 3:57 p.m., DOLNCC contacted Brett Barrick, MSHA's South Central Assistant District Manager, who dispatched Larry Kinsey, Mine Safety and Health Inspector, and Wesley Hackworth, Supervisory Mine Safety and Health Inspector in MSHA's Norman, Oklahoma field office, to the mine site. Kinsey and Hackworth arrived at 5:06 p.m., and issued an order under section 103(k) of the Mine Act to secure the scene and ensure the safety of miners.

On June 25, 2019, Laurence Dunlap, Supervisory Mine Safety and Health Inspector in MSHA's Dallas, Texas field office and James Meadows, Mine Safety and Health Inspector, arrived on the scene to conduct a fatal injury accident investigation. MSHA's accident investigation team conducted a physical examination of the accident scene, interviewed a Dolese employee and four Northwest employees, reviewed training documentation, and examined work procedures relevant to the accident. MSHA conducted the investigation with the assistance of mine management, miners, and contractors. See Appendix A for a list of persons participating in the investigation.

DISCUSSION

Location of Accident

The accident occurred on the East access road to the lake/dredge pond. See Appendix B for a map with the approximate location of the equipment involved in the accident.

Weather

The weather at the time of the accident was clear, with temperatures in the low 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Investigators did not consider the weather to be a factor in the accident.

Equipment Involved in the Accident

The rigging truck involved in the accident was a Kenworth T880 truck, Serial No. 3345, with an attached to a 48-foot trailer. The trailer was loaded with counter weights, spreader bars, steel pads, and additional rigging materials for the 300-ton crane. Estimated weight for all equipment was around 78,000 to 80,000 lbs.

A Caterpillar D6R bulldozer, Serial No. 206229, was dispatched to tow the truck and trailer.

Training and Experience

Witte had been employed by Northwest Crane Service, LLC for 11 years. Witte was a rigger for approximately four years and a crane operator until the time of his death. All training was up-to-date.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

The accident investigation team conducted a root cause analysis to identify the underlying cause of the accident. The team identified the following root cause and the contractor implemented the corresponding corrective actions to prevent a recurrence.

Root Cause: The victim approached the moving vehicle without ensuring the equipment operator was aware of his close proximity and his intentions for approaching the equipment.

Corrective Action: The contractor provided additional training to all contractor employees on notifying equipment operators before approaching equipment.

CONCLUSION

Neil P. Witte, died on June 24, 2019, while assisting in the removal of a stuck rigging truck. The victim approached the moving truck and was fatally injured when he was crushed by the truck’s tires.

Approved: _____ *Date:* _____

William D. O’Dell
South Central District Manager

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

A 103(k) Order No. 8965067 was issued on June 24, 2019,

An accident occurred at this location on June 24th, 2019 at approximately 3:30 p.m. The order was to ensure the safety of all persons at the operation and also to prevent further destruction of any evidence pertinent to the investigation. It prohibits all activities at the East access road down the dredge lake/pond until MSHA has determined that it is safe to resume normal mining operations in the area. The mine operator shall obtain prior approval from an authorized representative for all actions to recover and/or restore operations to the affected area.

Appendix A
Persons Participating in the Investigation
(Persons interviewed are indicated by a * next to their name)

Dolese Bros. Co.

David Finley..... Director Health, Safety & Environmental
 Jake HillemeierManager Health, Safety & Environmental
 Josh Bowen Specialist Health, Safety & Environmental
 Brandon Wells Superintendent
 Jason Wise*Leadman

Northwest Crane Service

Austin Helm HSE Manager
 Caden LockeHSE Coordinator
 Shane Aquino..... Quality Manager
 Madison McDonald*Crane Operator
 Charles Morgan*Rigger
 Alan Ventris*Rigger
 Travis Vowell*Field Supervisor

Outside Sources

Richard Shore..... Administrator, Department of Mines, Oklahoma
 Travis ShoreDepartment of Mines, Oklahoma
 Troy Young.....Department of Mines, Oklahoma

Mine Safety and Health Administration

Laurence Dunlap..... Supervisory Mine Safety and Health Inspector – Lead Investigator
 James MeadowsMine Safety and Health Inspector

Appendix B Map of the Accident Site

(The map provided in the investigation was enhanced so as to provide more details in the approximate location the equipment involved in the accident)

