

NZ Safety Alert

10 July 2020

Let's work together to keep ourselves and our workers safe

Bucket falls from excavator

An operator of an excavator with a quick hitch and bucket attached, lifted the boom of the excavator and propelled the bucket 5 metres towards a nearby worker. Luckily, the bucket missed the worker, and no-one was injured. The locking pin was not inserted into the quick hitch.

Buckets or attachments detach because the safety pin securing the attachment is not correctly fitted, or the automatic safety system securing the attachment is not engaged. In either situation, the consequences can be fatal.



MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 30 months to Dec 2019 show 17% of all incidents (452 incidents) result from falls, 138 of which result from fall of equipment.

You need to ensure that:

1. A safety pin is securely in place or the automatic system has engaged correctly on a quick hitch unit before starting work, and also when fitting a different attachment.
2. An exclusion zone is established below and around the vicinity of the bucket when using the excavator or backhoe if there are other workers on the site.
3. Excavator and backhoe operators are trained in how to use the plant safely and are competent to use the specific quick hitch on the plant they are using.

Know of an incident or near miss? Please share the learnings with us.