

## NO SEATBELTS? A DEADLY MISTAKE!

The California Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program has been investigating work-related deaths since 1992. The goal of the FACE program is to prevent these deaths by informing workers and managers of worksite hazards and how to avoid them. The two incidents below involve workers who died because there were no seatbelts, or the seatbelts were used the wrong way. One of the deaths happened in a vehicle that had no protection for the occupants if the vehicle rolled over.



### A BACKHOE OPERATOR IS RUN OVER BY A BACKHOE

A 46-year-old backhoe operator, James C.\*, died after being run over by his backhoe. The backhoe had a rollover protective structure (ROPS). James was digging a trench above a 10-foot high slope. He was moving the backhoe forward when a front wheel of the backhoe hit a rock. This caused the backhoe to bounce. James tried to regain control. Then he put the backhoe in reverse by mistake. One of the rear wheels hit the previously dug trench. The backhoe bounced again. James decided to jump out, and took off his seatbelt. James jumped toward the high side of the slope but rolled and slid down to the bottom. The backhoe traveled back down the slope and ran over him.

- ▶ Many workers believe they can safely jump from a vehicle if a mishap occurs. However, workers often are injured or killed if they try to jump.

### A WELDER DIES WHEN HE IS THROWN FROM A CART WITHOUT SEATBELTS OR ROLLOVER PROTECTION

A 49-year-old welder, Kyle H.\*, died when a forklift struck his electric cart. Kyle was riding in a cart driven by a co-worker. A forklift was traveling down the same roadway in the opposite direction. The forklift driver had a partially blocked field of vision because of a large load. He made an abrupt left turn into the cart while

trying to turn down a side road. The cart was spun around. Kyle and his co-worker were thrown from the cart. The co-worker received some cuts and bruises. Kyle was run over by the forklift. The cart did not have seatbelts or rollover protection.

- ▶ Many workplace vehicles are not required by law or regulation to have seatbelts or rollover protection. However, these vehicles can rollover or eject their passengers if involved in a traffic mishap.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Ensure seatbelts work correctly and are used.
- ▶ Ensure seatbelts (and ROPS where appropriate) are present on vehicles that have the potential for rollovers or crashes.

For complete fatality reports of these (96CA0011 & 99CA003), or other cases, and additional information on the California FACE program, please contact:

California Department of Public Health  
Occupational Health Branch (OHB), FACE Program  
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, 3rd Floor, Richmond, CA 94804  
(510) 620-5757

<http://cdph.ca.gov/face>

CA Relay Service: 711 or (800) 735-2929 (hearing/speech impaired)

To obtain a copy of this document in an alternate format, please contact OHB at (510) 620-5757. Allow at least 10 days to coordinate alternate format services.

\* Not the victim's real name

# PLEASE POST

California Department of Public Health  
Occupational Health Branch, FACE Program  
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, 3rd Floor  
Richmond, CA 94804



**FACE stands for "Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation."** The purpose of the **FACE** program is to identify hazards that may cause work-related deaths so that employers and employees can help prevent them. **FACE** is a program run by the Occupational Health Branch within the California Department of Public Health, and funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor  
State of California  
Kimberly Belshé, Secretary  
Health and Human Services Agency  
Mark B. Horton, Director  
Department of Public Health  
FEBRUARY 2002

