FATAL ACCIDENT

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

September 28, 1999: A 19-year old electrical instrument helper was at a construction site that was on a manufacturing company’s property. A contractor positioned a 50-ton hydraulic crane in an open area that consisted of compacted fill material. This area was the only location that the crane could be situated because the receiving area for the equipment was too close to the property border. The crane’s outriggers were set, but matting was placed only under one of the outrigger pads. As the crane was moving large sections of piping to a new location, the ground collapsed and the crane overturned, striking the helper.

Section 1926.1402, Ground conditions, will prevent this type of accident. Under that section, employers must ensure that the surface on which a crane is operating is sufficiently level and firm to support the crane in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications. In addition, § 1926.1402 imposes specific duties on both the entity responsible for the project (the controlling entity) and the entity operating the crane to ensure that the crane is adequately supported. It places responsibility for ensuring that the ground conditions are adequate on the controlling entity, while also making the employer operating the crane responsible notifying the controlling entity of any deficiency in the ground conditions, and having the deficiency corrected before operating the crane.