



September 18 — When Something Doesn't Feel Right, Stop and Evaluate

While getting materials off the dock saw an employee get in a forklift and started to back up and in doing so he started to run into a steam line going to a steam heater. His ground guide was walking away.

I yelled and got his attention and told him to stop, he moved forward and his ground guide came back to help direct him.

Your Ground Guide Is There for a Reason

While materials were being moved from the dock, an employee got into a forklift and began backing up. As the forklift moved, it started heading toward a steam line leading to a steam heater. At the same time, the ground guide was walking away from the forklift.

The situation was stopped when the operator's attention was called to the approaching hazard. The forklift was moved forward, and the ground guide returned to help direct the equipment.

When operating mobile equipment in areas with limited visibility or nearby structures, the ground guide is an important part of the operation. The operator and ground guide need to stay in communication and maintain their positions until the maneuver is complete.

A ground guide walking away while the equipment is still moving can leave the operator without the assistance needed to identify hazards around the equipment.

Hazards

- Striking fixed structures or equipment
- Limited visibility while backing
- Loss of communication with the ground guide
- Pinch point and struck by hazards
- Damage to equipment or facility piping

Words of Wisdom

The ground guide and operator work as a team. When communication or visual contact is lost, the equipment needs to stop until that connection is restored.

Pause and Think

- Is your ground guide in position before you begin moving?
- Can the operator clearly see the ground guide?
- What should happen if the ground guide leaves the area?
- Are there pipes, equipment, or other hazards in the travel path?
- Are the operator and ground guide communicating throughout the entire maneuver?

Closing Thought

A ground guide can only protect you when they're in position. Stay connected, communicate clearly, and stop the equipment when the guide is no longer there.