

Quick Hitch Devices in Plant

The Problem

There have been several incidents where quick hitch devices used to attach buckets and other implements to plant have failed causing serious injury to workers.

Quick hitches are attached using the original bucket or implement attachment pins. They have one open ended slot which is placed over the bottom pin on the implement to be attached and the top pin is "trapped" in position by the movement of a hydraulic cylinder. A safety device should be incorporated to ensure that the implement is not released in the event of hydraulic system failure.

Due to the history of failures and likelihood of further failures, any person involved in using these devices should ensure that:

- (a) a hydraulic lock valve is fitted into the circuit with no flexible hose between the valve and the hydraulic lock cylinder;
- (b) oil supply to the lock cylinder is piped from a point recommended by the machine manufacturer and/or the quick hitch manufacturer;
- (c) the control valve for the hydraulic lock cylinder is a type recommended by the quick hitch manufacturer;
- (d) where electric operation of the control valve is used, power is only required to unlock the hitch;
- (e) persons are not allowed under the bucket or implement;
- (f) persons should not be lifted in a bucket or on any implement;
- (g) a safety chain or other device (eg. pin) is used in conjunction with a quick hitch.

The primary focus of the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* is the obligation imposed on employers, self-employed persons, workers and other persons in a workplace to ensure health and safety within the workplace. This obligation effectively requires all persons involved with quick hitch devices to take every available precaution to ensure a healthy and safe environment.

Further Information

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