AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY SAFETY - POTATO HARVESTERS

SUMMARY OF INCIDENT
A worker was fatally injured when they were standing on a work platform of a trailed potato harvester, and fell on the ground and was subsequently run over by a wheel of the harvester.

PROBABLE CAUSES
The potato harvester had step ladders on both sides for access to the work platform. Prior to the incident, a ladder had been removed for servicing.

Workers could only access and exit the machine from the left hand steps.

A worker was run over by the machine after they exited the work platform via the right-hand side door, whilst the harvester was in motion.

Although it might not have contributed to the incident, the absence of the ladder on one side of the machine required workers on the opposite side to climb over the sorting table and under a conveyor to access or egress from the machine.

ACTION REQUIRED
Risks of injuries from hazards in and around where a person is required to work (e.g. near the sorter or conveyor) must be eliminated or minimised as far as practicable.

Where the work platform is at an elevated position, safe means of access and egress must be provided. Risk from falls must also be eliminated or minimised.

Handrails and gates must be of the appropriate height (900-1100mm). Gates or doors (where provided) must open inwards (away from the ground levels) and must be capable of being secured or locked. The door, if provided, must not obscure the view outside.

The operator of the tractor towing the harvester must have good vision (direct or via mirrors) of the access and egress points of the trailed harvester.

Where access steps have been removed for servicing, alternative safe means of access and egress must be provided. Workers must not be exposed to any hazards from using alternative means of access.

Ensure workers wear sturdy non-slip foot wear.

Workers should not be allowed to attempt to get on or off a moving machine, no matter how slow it is moving.

Keep work platforms clean and tidy, remove any trip and slip hazards. Provide non-slip steps and hand holds for safe access.

Monitor and supervise workers to ensure that any risks to health and safety are prevented.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Website: www.safework.sa.gov.au
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FURTHER INFORMATION
For further information please contact
SafeWork SA: GPO Box 465, ADELAIDE SA 5001
Country offices: Berri, Mount Gambier, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie and Whyalla
Help Centre: Library and Bookshop - 100 Waymouth Street, Adelaide
Telephone: 1300 365 255

www.safework.sa.gov.au

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