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Preventing Equipment Damage Incidents

The goal of operating safely is first to protect life and secondary is to protect property. The construction industry can not only be hazardous to workers, but equipment damage incidents can be frequent and costly.

Anytime there is equipment damage not only is there an associated cost, but there is also the chance for injury for the operators or ground personnel in the area.

Common Examples of Heavy Equipment Damage:

- Broken windshields/ windows
- Damaged tires
- Damaged hoses/ lines
- Damaged tailgates
- Dings/ dents

Causes of Equipment Damage:

There is a multitude of ways and reasons why heavy equipment is damaged on a construction site. While wear and tear is normal over time, many of the mentioned types of incidents above are fully preventable. Consider the best practices below to prevent damage to heavy equipment at your worksite.

Best Practices to Prevent Equipment Damage:

1. Operate heavy equipment within its design limits. Pushing the equipment past its limits leaves you at risk for injury as well as the likely damaging the equipment.

If you are not trained for a specific piece of equipment or do not feel comfortable with a task stop work and talk to a supervisor.

2. Do not act without giving careful thought. Many incidents occur when completing a task outside of normal operation or during an emergency.

For example, an articulating dump truck gets stuck in a dump area with his bed tilted. A dozer comes up to the bed and instead of just making sure the bed does not go over the operator decides to push on the bed without a spotter and damages the lift mechanism of the bed rendering it inoperable. The operator instead should have stopped work to notify a supervisor of the situation.

Getting a second opinion on how to correct the situation or having a spotter there could have prevented the equipment damage to the bed.

3. Involve the right personnel. Similar to the situation above, anytime there is an issue with a task or the equipment itself stop work and get the right personnel involved. Taking the few minutes to reevaluate a work task or to inspect the equipment can make the difference in an incident occurring or not.

Summary:

Think about the equipment damage events you have experienced on this job or on past jobs.

- What was similar about each incident?
- What could have been done differently to prevent it?
- What situations may arise here that could result in damage to heavy equipment?