N. Blosi Orchard Platform Harvester Drove Through a Rut and Tipped Over

Two employees were operating the N. Blosi Orchard Platform Harvester, a type of Aerial Work Platform (AWP), to remove a tree canopy system from the tops of cherry trees. At the time of the incident, the employees were traveling down the outside row of the cherry tree plot with the platform raised approximately 5 feet. This is when the AWP wheels slid into a rut, causing it to tip onto its side, landing on a 1 ½ foot berm. The employees fell with the AWP’s basket and struck against the machine’s guardrail when it hit the berm. Both employees sustained minor injuries.

Training Requirements:
• Only authorized and trained employees shall be allowed to operate an AWP.
  o Training requires employees to complete AWP classroom training (Course EHS 4382 - Part 1) and, a Proficiency Evaluation (Course EHS 4384 - Part 2) on each type of AWP that they are tasked to operate.
    ▪ Refresher training and proficiency evaluation is required for all operators every three years.

To prevent similar incidents in the future:
• Prior to use, all limitations for the AWP should be checked in accordance to the provided operator’s manual as well as all signage and placarding.
  o Do not operate the machine beyond its limits of operation specified by the manufacturer.
  o Be familiar with the operator’s manual and refer to it when necessary.
• Prior to and periodically throughout operation of an AWP, the travel/work area must be inspected for ruts, holes, slopes, floor obstructions, overhead obstructions, power lines, and other unsafe conditions.
  o The operator must always remain in the operating controls position when the AWP is in motion.
Travel and work areas with unsafe conditions must be reported to a supervisor and must be corrected before work begins.

- Consider the weather conditions when using an AWP outdoors.
  - Do not operate an AWP in thunderstorms.
  - Do not operate an AWP in wind speeds that exceed the manufacturer’s recommendation.
    - Most AWPs are rated for a maximum wind speed of 25 mph.
    - Operators can use an anemometer to measure wind speeds.
    - If the operator doesn’t have a way to measure wind speed, strong winds can be characterized by winds that move larger tree branches or make it difficult to use an umbrella.
    - Stop work immediately if these conditions develop when operating the AWP.
- Operators should keep the entire body inside the basket and maintain firm footing on the AWP’s floor.
- Everyone on the ground must be clear of the lift when raised, lowered, or in working positions.
- Additional AWP safety guidance can be found on EHS’s Mobile Equipment webpage.