Safety Alert
Balfour Beatty M1/A1 DBFO RIDDOR Fractured Skull

18 November 2019

Background information

On Wednesday 16th October 2019 the M1/A1 DBFO contract were carrying out surfacing works to the carriageway. A contract haulier was tasked with delivering and collecting the surfacing equipment using two low-loaders.

At approximately 03:05 an operative drove a JCB 3CX to behind where the two loaders were parked ready for it to be loaded. The driver of the rear vehicle then lowered the ramps in preparation to load the JCB while the driver of the front vehicle went to do likewise.

As the driver of the front vehicle was lowering his ramps he heard the sound of what he understood to be a safety helmet hitting the floor so he walked around the second vehicle to see if everything was alright with his colleague and found him lying on the ground with his eyes open but unresponsive and with a cut to the left hand side of his head.

The driver of the front vehicle called for assistance and whilst first aid was being administered emergency services were called. Paramedics arrived and once stable the injured person was taken to Leeds General Infirmary.

It was confirmed that the IP had suffered a skull fracture and underwent surgery. He was released from hospital two days later and is making a good recovery.

Following a re-enactment it is believed that the door opened more quickly and further than anticipated catching the IP unawares and causing him to overbalance and fall from the machine.

Lessons Learnt

- All machines to be checked and door hinges tightened or changed to prevent them opening too quickly when pushed or if they are caught by a sudden gust of wind
- All drivers and operatives to be briefed on ensuring they take additional care when opening doors to alight the machine.
- A working Group to be set up to look at a suitable fall protection system for the wider industry
- All personnel working on Highways Projects to be supplied with climbing style helmets and briefed on correct use.

home safe and well