



SUMMARY

On April 8, 2006, a 38-year-old male volunteer fire fighter (the victim) was struck by a shackle on a recoiling tow rope and died three days later. The fire department was dispatched to a controlled burn that had escaped its boundaries. Fire fighters arrived on the scene, extinguished the fire, and started departing the scene. An engine was being driven out of a soybean field when it became stuck in the mud. An attempt was made to tow the engine from the field using a tractor, tow rope and screw-type shackles on either end of the tow rope attached to the tractor and engine. With the victim sitting in the driver's seat of the engine and another fire fighter sitting in the passenger's seat, a farmer started moving the tractor forward. When tension was applied to the tow rope, the shackle on the tractor failed and the tow rope with its shackle attached recoiled toward the engine. The shackle smashed through the windshield, struck the victim in the forehead and then proceeded out through the back window. Other fire fighters, standing in the area, witnessed the incident and ran to the aid of the victim and called for Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The victim was transported by ambulance to the local hospital and then was air lifted to a metropolitan trauma center. The victim died three days later on April 11, 2006, due to the injuries he sustained in the incident.



**Windshield of the fire engine involved
in the incident**



**Shackle and tow bar of the tractor
shown. The shackles used had a
17 000 lbs working load limit each.**

Location of the stuck fire engine

