

Vehicle Recovery Fatality Report

Description of Incident: At approximately 2 pm on March 17, 2004, Jordan Ropple, was operating a forklift that was being used to move boxes into a storage magazine at the Innicor Perforating Systems manufacturing facility in Standard, Alberta, when it became stuck in the mud. The lead hand on site went and got a pickup truck to pull the forklift out of the mud. A chain with a web sling was attached to the forklift and the sling was placed over the hitch ball of the pickup truck. When the pickup truck failed to free the forklift on the first attempt, the driver of the backed up, letting slack in the sling and accelerated forward. The hitch ball broke off, becoming a projectile and struck Jordan in the head. Jordan was pronounced dead at the scene.

Contributing Factors: The hitch ball was not manufactured to be used for vehicle recovery and the load applied to it was extremely high as compared to its design capacity. The muddy ground was too soft for the forklift to safely operate. Also the workers were unaware of the hazards and limitations of the truck and attachments used to retrieve the stuck forklift. There was no hazard assessment done on site before the recovery attempt.



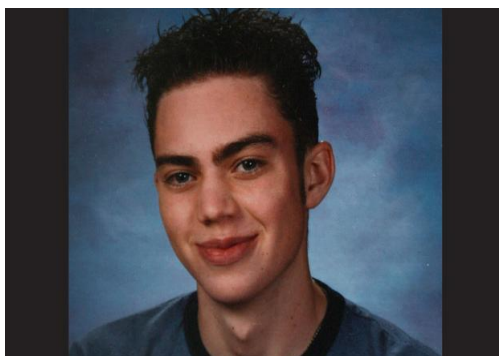
Photograph #1-

Shows the broken hitch ball. Upon further investigation, the ball was found to have no signs of damage prior to the incident. The markings on the top were stamped 2" 3500 Lbs V5 indicating its size and load rating.



Photographs #2 and 3-

These photographs show the pickup truck used and a close up of the rear bumper where the hitch ball was attached.



Jordan Ropple: 1986-2004