

# Rapid Lesson Sharing

**Event Type:** Dozer Rollover

**Date:** September 4, 2025

**Location:** Crown Creek Fire  
Washington State

## The Story and Lessons from this Dozer Rollover Incident

During dozer operations on the Charlie Division of the Crown Creek Fire, an operator was constructing line around a structure when they encountered a large stump. Several attempts to remove the stump with the dozer were unsuccessful. The operator then attempted to maneuver around it.

As this maneuver was being made, the slope gave way beneath the machine. The dozer slid downslope and rolled onto its left side.

The operator was wearing a seatbelt and the Roll Over Protective Structure (ROPS) performed as designed. Because of these factors, the operator was not injured.

After this rollover event, the Incident Management Team (IMT) and an IMT Safety Officer conducted assessments.



## Lessons

- ❖ Slope and soil stability can fail suddenly without visible indicators.
- ❖ Obstacles such as stumps can quickly escalate risk when combined with marginal terrain.
- ❖ Terrain that appears workable at first glance may hide unseen weaknesses.
- ❖ Always scout questionable ground before committing equipment.
- ❖ A spotter or line scout can help identify hazards such as weak soils, hidden drop-offs, or unstable stumps.
- ❖ Trust your instincts. If terrain feels marginal, stop and reassess with supervision.

***"If something feels off, call for a second set of eyes before pushing ahead."***

**The Dozer Operator on this Incident**

## Successes

- ❖ The operator's consistent use of a seatbelt and reliance on the Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS) prevented serious injury.
- ❖ The immediate reporting and IMT/Safety Officer follow-up enabled lessons to be captured.

## Challenges

- ❖ Decision making under operational pressure contributed to risk exposure.
- ❖ Limited visibility of slope instability increased the difficulty in hazard recognition.

## What Actions can be Taken Moving Forward?

- ❖ Reinforce seatbelt and ROPS use as non-negotiable practices.
- ❖ When terrain is in question, encourage operators to pause operations and request reassessment.
- ❖ Promote alternative tactics for stump removal in steep or unstable ground (such as saw crews, handline construction).
- ❖ Share this lesson broadly with dozer operators across regions to improve awareness of slope instability hazards.

## Key Takeaway

*Seatbelts and ROPS save lives. More importantly, scouting terrain, using spotters, and pausing for reassessment are essential steps to prevent heavy equipment rollovers on steep or unstable ground.*

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