INCIDENT ALERT

An ironworker was tasked with relocating a temporary steel column. The column was in an area that was under demolition, and a remote controlled robotic concrete breaker was being used for concrete removal. Access to the area was very restricted, with less than 12 inches on each side of the machine for access. Demolition had progressed to a point where the column needed to be moved in order to complete the work. The ironworker found he would have to move a brace that was connected to a wall next to the machine and needed a ladder to reach the brace. He retrieved a ladder and found it necessary to climb around the machine to get to his work location. He stepped up on the machine wheel with his left foot and the wheel rotated, causing his foot to become wedged between the wheel and the wall. His large toe was forced back, cracking the metatarsal. He was able to walk from the area and contact his foreman, who arranged transportation to a nearby medical facility where he received treatment and was released to return to restricted duty.

LESSONS LEARNED

The task being performed was in association with an unanticipated change. The installation plan for the temporary column had not taken into account the need to leave enough space for the demolition equipment. Asking critical questions such as what work tasks and methods will be taking place in the area during the design phase (in this case, the design for the temporary enclosure) can help mitigate the need for changes. Additionally, the area the machine was being used in was comparatively small. This type of machine uses hydraulic outriggers to stabilize it as it works and the outriggers were in the down position. One of the wheels was slightly off the floor, which allowed it to spin. The limited access to the area was a contributing factor to the injury, as was the practice of using a wheel as a step. If the machine operator had been included in the task planning effort he could have raised the outriggers into an upright position and created better area access.

It is important for us all to remember that modifying procedure, changes in process, and changes in the tools being used can all pose additional hazards. Those tasks must be thought through thoroughly and methods of eliminating the hazards developed by all people involved in the task. More thorough planning and observation of the work process as well as better assessment of the work area could have helped prevent this injury.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about how they manage change and the potential hazards created when work plans must be modified. Ask how workers are included in the task planning and job hazard analysis process. Ask how they assure that trades working in tight areas share their task plans, and how work is integrated to assure the safest possible working environment for all workers in a given area.

2. Watch for tasks that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are people working around machinery? Do they understand the hazards associated with work in close...
proximity to machinery? Can equipment be moved or positioned to aid other workers in safely completing their tasks?

3. Share this Incident Alert with your contractor and ask them to share it with their workers.

Distribution:
All CPO Staff