

Worker Crushed by Knuckle Boom

Incident Date: October 16, 2010 / Location: Bonnyville, AB / Industry: Oilfield Services



AI Teaching Illustration. Conceptual boom-outrigger crush zone before contact. Equipment geometry and worker position are simplified.

What Happened

An apprentice boom-truck operator and a helper arrived at a yard to unload tubing and sucker rods. The helper began removing load straps and told the operator an outrigger had not been extended and engaged. The operator later used the passenger-side controls to unfold the knuckle boom.

No one saw the fatal movement. The helper heard a scream and found the operator trapped between the boom and outrigger. The helper moved the boom to release the worker and sought medical help. Emergency responders attended, and the operator was pronounced dead at the scene.

Why This Became Fatal

The operating position put the worker inside a closing gap between boom and outrigger. OHS found the operating position did not follow the manual. The lever order was reversed between the two control stations. Familiarity with one side did not replace checking the other.

NEVER FORGET.

LET THEIR STORY PREVENT RECURRENCE.

What Safe Looks Like

Know the controls and the clearance before moving the boom.



1 Confirm the Controls

Review each station's lever functions and the approved operating position.

2 Complete the Setup

Set outriggers and supports using the manufacturer's procedure.

3 Stay Clear of Movement

Keep everyone outside boom and outrigger crush zones; stop if unsure.

AI Teaching Illustration. Pre-operation check; setup and controls are machine-specific. **LSR links:** Safe Mechanical Lifting; Line of Fire.

Investigation Outcome

OHS issued a **stop-use order** and arranged a functional inspection. Identified deficiencies were not related to the controls' operation that caused the incident. Bearing Oilfield Services Ltd. complied with orders and completed repairs. The June 2012 report **does not state a prosecution outcome**; employer or supervisor convictions and fines remain unconfirmed.

Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 Are the lever positions identical at both operating stations on our equipment?
- 2 Where will the boom and outriggers move during unfolding and stowing?
- 3 Have we completed the manufacturer's setup and confirmed a safe operating position?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse work if the controls or clearance were uncertain?

SAFETY COMES FIRST.

Your Right to Refuse – Alberta. You may refuse work you reasonably believe presents an undue hazard: a serious and immediate threat. Promptly report the refusal and reasons to your employer or supervisor. They must investigate. Contact Alberta OHS if unresolved. Take reasonable care not to endanger others. You are protected from reprisal.

Sources: [Alberta OHS investigation F-546720](#), pp. 3-8, 12-16; summary completed June 6, 2012. [Alberta refusal guidance](#). Prepared October 20, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.

NEVER FORGET.

LET THEIR STORY PREVENT RECURRENCE.