

Worker Caught in Pipelayer Track

Incident Date: March 5, 2022 / Location: Near Edson, AB / Industry: Pipeline Construction



AI Teaching Illustration. Shaded gap shows the track-to-bracket pinch point. Equipment, worker pose and control locations are schematic, not an exact reconstruction.

What Happened

An Excel Projects operator was preparing a pipelayer for removal from a wellsite near Edson because of an exhaust leak. The operator left it idling in neutral without engaging the parking brake. Later, while on the tracks at the entrance, the operator inadvertently contacted the shifter.

The machine moved into first gear. Its track pulled the operator into the gap beneath the sideboom mounting bracket, causing fatal injuries. A heat tarp obscured the brake lever and obstructed access. There was no alternative access route or safeguard separating the operator from the moving track.

Why This Became Fatal

Neutral did not secure the machine against movement. The disengaged parking brake left the shifter able to move into gear. Its function was poorly identified and the tarp obscured it. Standing on the track exposed the operator to the unguarded pinch point.

NEVER FORGET.

LET THEIR STORY PREVENT RECURRENCE.

What Safe Looks Like

Secure against movement before leaving or accessing the operator station.



1 Engage and Verify

Apply and verify the brake using the manufacturer procedure.

2 Keep Access Clear

Keep safety controls identifiable and unobstructed; assess winter tarps.

3 Make It Safe First

Shut down and control unintended movement before exposed access.

AI Teaching Illustration. Control location and lever geometry are schematic. Verify the actual brake and shutdown procedure. **LSR links:** Line of Fire / Energy Isolation.

Investigation Outcome

Excel Projects pleaded guilty on January 27, 2025. Penalties totalled **\$350,000**: a \$5,000 fine including surcharge, plus \$225,000 to Olds College and \$120,000 to Portage College for safety scholarships. Excel introduced winter-tarp procedures and training and painted the brake lever red. The summary reports no separate supervisor penalty.

Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 Where do we stand on tracks or near moving parts to access equipment?
- 2 How do we verify the machine is secured before leaving the controls?
- 3 Could tarps or modifications obscure controls or obstruct our access?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse access if unintended movement was not controlled?

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-OHS-270325](#), pp. 2-9; summary completed February 28, 2025. [Alberta refusal guidance](#). Prepared October 19, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.

NEVER FORGET.

LET THEIR STORY PREVENT RECURRENCE.