

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Ensure plant returns are thoroughly filled out and returned to your Plant Coordinator in a timely manner. Details should include the machine plant number, location, the hours at the start and the finish of the fortnight, the dates and hours worked and any machine defects requiring repair. Daily checks of all machine fluids must be carried out and signed off.

PLANT CONTACT DETAILS

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Mini Excavator parking procedure

The recent failure in the parking brake system on a Contractor's hired mini excavator (on an alternate network) has highlighted the need to remind operators of the need to show extreme care when parking the excavator and leaving it unattended for any period of time.

In this incident, the operator being required to leave the machine, lowered the boom to rest the attachment in the four foot and shut the machine down. Several minutes later the machine proceeded to move and run away down the gradient for 100 metres until being stopped by another employee of the contracting company.



Two causes of the incident from a mechanical perspective were identified.

- 1) A piece of debris was found lodged in the flow control valve, thus causing a blockage which prevented the correct application of the spring loaded parking brake.
- 2) Inefficiency in the hired hydraulic drive motors also contributed to the incident by allowing oil to drain from the motors when the machine was shut down. This leakage, although minor, was enough to allow the machine to start moving and gather momentum.

A third cause was determined to have contributed to the incident, that being the failure of the lowered boom and attachment to halt the machine's progress. It was concluded that the attachment may not have been grounded or was just sitting on a high spot of ballast, without sufficient down force to hold the machine in position.

While further actions are being taken to eliminate future mechanical issues, all operators of hired mini excavators are reminded of the following procedure in the event of a machine being required to be left unattended for any period of time. This should be used in conjunction with the information supplied in the machine operating manual, which must be read and understood by all operator prior to operating the machine.



ALWAYS

- 1) Lower the machine to enable the rubber tracks to fully contact the rail lines.
- 2) Place the boom or attachment firmly on the ground.
- 3) Shut down the machine if leaving it for an extended period of time.

Operators should be aware that they should immediately stand down the machine if the park brake is creeping whilst on rail and report the problem immediately to their Supervisor and Plant Coordinator.