

## Fatality Alert: Preliminary Information

Post this alert in containers & discuss at safety/tailgate meetings.

**Date: 5 August 2024**

WorkSafe has notified FISC of fatalities in the Tairāwhiti area on 22 July 2024, and a second fatality on 31 July in the Central North Island. Both incidents involved excavators working close to, or in, a body of water and experiencing a tip-over. In both cases the Excavators and Operators were submerged under water.

WorkSafe have attended both scenes and opened investigations into both incidents.

Our thoughts go out to the families and others involved in this tragic event.

These incidents are still under investigation and details are still to be determined, so contributing factors to the incident are not yet available.

### Consider these points when operating an excavator near water and unstable ground conditions:

Identify and manage the risks

1. Plan the work and identify hazards
2. Assess the risks and agree on controls
3. Do the work using the agreed controls
4. Monitor the controls and review their effectiveness



- **Communication:** Let your workers and anyone else involved in the work know about the risks and the agreed controls in a way that's easily understandable.
- **Change:** History tells us that change (planned changes or unplanned changes, such as upset conditions) can create risk. Make sure workers are clear on what to do if there are unplanned changes, such as deteriorating weather, and that they watch out for anything that's changing.

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Some controls appropriate for excavation work near water, include:

- Ensure the excavator is in a stable position before commencing work, monitor ground conditions if they become unstable. You may need to re-set your controls if ground conditions deteriorate and allows deep water ingress into the work site.
- Work is always carried out at a safe distance from the edge of a face. If working near water, establish a safe set-back position to ensure stability is not compromised due to undercutting.
- If working in water, set an agreed depth control that you will not operate below, e.g. water height against an agreed position on the tracks.
- Ensure your good communications systems and lone worker controls are in place.
- Provide secondary emergency egress from the cab.
- Tracks should be facing the excavation to allow a rapid exit.
- If possible or appropriate work should be scheduled in dryer periods where water levels maybe lower.
- Monitor water velocity and water level for any changes that would trigger a need to re-assess risk and controls.
- If crossing water, ensure the bottom is visible.