

### Auger Drill Accident:

An exposed foot switch led to a preventable serious accident in Louisiana. The design of a truck-based auger drilling platform had the operator seated such that he did not directly face the six foot diameter drill bit, but rather at an approximate 90° angle. Further, the drill's free fall switch was mounted on the platform where the operator rested his feet and was unguarded. By resting his left foot on the platform, the operator would periodically, and accidentally, release the drill, which weighed hundreds of pounds. The drill descended both rapidly and silently. The ensuing accident was entirely predictable. At a job site, the ground man told the operator to "hold up" and went underneath the drill to retrieve the T-post that acted as a location marker. The drill operator looked away and unknowingly actuated the free fall switch when he repositioned his left foot. The ground man was crushed by the drill, but fortunately not killed. I determined that the switch was defective as it was unprotected, out of sight, and unnecessary to the operation of the device; it was a convenience only. An unguarded switch that actually encourages life-altering injuries does not follow standard and customary design practices.

