Safety Spotter Awareness

Introduction:

Many accidents in the Auto Salvage industry involve the use of heavy equipment and machinery, and the majority of these accidents occur when a spotter is not used. Every facility is different, so the utilization of a spotter will be site-specific. Every worksite has its own specific hazards that present a great risk to equipment operators and ground workers. These hazards include ground conditions involving uneven terrain which present great risk including equipment rollover, and workers losing their footing. Other hazards include underground utilities, and overhead power lines or other structures. Because of these many potential hazards, it is important to conduct a Hazard Assessment.

Discussion Points:

- Types of accidents involving the use of heavy equipment and machinery.
- Hazards are site specific, and present great risk to equipment operators and ground workers.
- Every facility must conduct a Hazard Assessment.
- Before operating machinery, perform a walk-around as part of the Hazard Assessment.
- Every worker must know their responsibilities and receive proper training.
- All workers must wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Discussion:

Before beginning any operation of machinery, the operator and spotter must perform a walk-around as part of the Hazard Assessment. This will give the operator and spotter time to discuss the equipment, and review the line of travel and identify the potential hazards. During the operation of equipment, the operator and spotter must always maintain visual contact with one another. The use of a two-way radio may be beneficial, but should not be relied upon as there is a possibility of losing communication. The operator should give all signals in a clear and precise manner that will be understood by the operator. In all cases, the operator must take guidance from the spotter. If there is ever an emergency, all equipment must be shut down, and the situation re-evaluated before continuing operation. Every worker must receive proper training, understand their responsibilities, and follow established rules and regulations. The spotter must wear appropriate PPE which includes a high-visibility safety vest, high-visibility glove, safety footwear and a safety helmet. The spotter must be devoted to the task and not be distracted while performing their job. Safety is the most important factor, and if properly observed everyone will go home safely at the end of the workday.

As always, stay safe out there!