Is Good Communication the Key?

Horns, buzzers, flashing lights, delayed start-up circuits, interlock switches and so on are all helpful items to safeguard your safety and your co-workers. However, they are not everywhere as the following article highlights.

Excerpts from Taunton Daily Gazette – March 14, 2013
By Maria Papadopoulos

AVON — Federal and state investigators are probing an apparent accident this week in which a Hanover man died when his co-worker from Lakeville drove over the man with a trailer truck at an Avon crane company, police said.

Emergency crews responded to Parker Drive off Bodwell Street in the Avon Industrial Park after police received an emergency call at 6:08 a.m. Tuesday. The truck driver had called police reporting he believed he had driven over a co-worker, police said.

When crews arrived, they found the victim, who worked as a mechanic, unresponsive on the pavement with serious upper body and facial injuries, according to Avon Police Sgt. George Houhoulis. An ambulance took the victim to Good Samaritan Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

Houhoulis described a dramatic scene where emergency crews did all they could to save the man, "We were doing everything we could. He had serious injuries," he said.

A preliminary investigation found the accident happened after a miscommunication between the two co-workers. A piece of equipment on the 48-foot flatbed trailer wasn't working, so the truck driver stopped the vehicle and asked the mechanic to look at the truck, Houhoulis said. "The mechanic didn't tell the driver that he was getting under the truck and the driver didn't see him and moved the truck," Houhoulis said.

The accident remains under investigation by state police detectives assigned to the Norfolk County district attorney's office.

There is just no substitute (even the best communication) to having complete and exclusive control when you are dealing with moving equipment. Even with trucks have keys or glad hand locks that can prevent unintentional movement.

How about you? Do you lockout the machine with your personal lock each and every time?