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One airlifted following construction accident

South Kitsap, Wash. -- A construction worker was airlifted to Harborview Medical Center, Seattle, in critical condition, after being knocked down and trapped underneath an excavator that tipped over earlier this afternoon.

The incident occurred around 2:45 p.m. on SE Cornell Road in the Southworth area of South Kitsap. Engine and medic units from South Kitsap Fire & Rescue responded to extricate the man who was buried in a large pile of dirt after being struck and trapped by the excavator's boom.

The 26 year-old victim, from Central Kitsap, was on the ground helping the heavy equipment operator to guide a large concrete septic tank into its final position inside a pit. The operator stated that he realized that the excavator could possibly roll over when he felt the machine become "Light in the rear." The operator warned his assistant. The victim was running, attempting to get to a safer location, when he was struck by the excavator's boom as the machine toppled over.

The man was found in the dirt pile and extricated using a smaller excavator and other equipment by SKF&R firefighters. Once pulled from the soil emergency first aid was rendered to the victim and continued during his transit to the airlift site and flight to Harborview.

The equipment operator was not injured.

Sheriff's patrol deputies responded to assist firefighters and to keep the scene secure, while sheriff's detectives responded to initiate an investigation. A concurrent investigation is being conducted by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries.

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