



Don't ever chase the vehicle: *Handbrakes and Hills*

Fellow farmer Mark Warren from the Hawke's Bay shares his recent story of losing his tractor on some steep terrain while going about a fencing job. Folding his arms and watching the tractor go over the edge was the best decision that he made in this moment.

Lesson learnt from this: ALWAYS check your handbrake BEFORE getting out of the vehicle.

Here is his story:

I was pulling out posts on an old fence line ready for the digger to put in a feed pad the next morning. I had jumped out to change the chain onto another post and had ripped the hand brake on as I hopped out.

Sadly the hand brake wasn't enough to hold it and I couldn't stop it running away by holding the chain, I did a quick calculation in my head about the chance of me climbing in to stop it safely, but decided:

1.) I could get caught in the spade lugs,

- 2.) It was only about 8 m from the top of the cliff ,and it could get hard to stop it on the cliff, even if I was inside it,
- 3.) I wouldn't had had a chance to get my seat belt on in time, and with out a belt on, your in much much more danger.
- 4.) It was getting dark, no one knew where I was, and if injured no one would have found me until the next day, and that would have created an unpleasant job picking up my bits.

So I made my self cross my arms and say a prayer for the tractor.

It took me a few minutes to climb down the cliff, and the motor was running the whole time upside down until it made some sad sounds and died.

The cab held up extremely well and if I was in it with the belt on, I probably would have survived. But it broke the back axle housing, so it must have landed with a big wallop.

Monday's job is to go in with a 14 tonne digger and dozer and extract the carcass costing me time and money but at least I am **alive and well!**