

# Fatality Narrative

## Excavation Contractor Run Over by Runaway Semi-Tractor\*

**Industry:** Excavation

**Occupation:** Company owner

**Task:** Loading excavator onto trailer of semi-tractor truck

**Type of Incident:** Run over by vehicle

**Release Date:** September 3, 2002

**Case No.:** 02WA026

**SHARP Report No.:** 71-4-2002

On the morning of April 18, 2002, the 41-year-old owner of an excavation company was run over and killed while trying to enter the cab of a runaway semi-tractor and trailer loaded with an excavator. The victim, who had been running this company for nearly 2 years, had been constructing a retaining wall with an employee. After using the excavator they moved the truck and trailer to a service road in order to load the excavator onto the trailer. The truck was parked pointing up hill on a road with a grade of about 22%. The wheels of the tractor-trailer were not chocked. After the excavator was successfully loaded onto the trailer, the victim and his employee were standing near the driver's side of the truck when the brakes let loose and the truck and trailer began rolling backwards downhill. The victim yelled, "look out" and apparently attempted to enter the truck's cab when he was run over by the wheels of the truck. The truck and trailer knocked down powerlines that fell on the victim before it came to rest in a jack-knifed position at the bottom of the slope. The victim was pronounced dead at a hospital a short time later. The other worker was uninjured.

### Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! When parking vehicles or equipment on an incline, set the parking brake, turn the wheels into the curb or berm (if available), and chock the wheels.
- Never attempt to enter a driverless vehicle while it's in motion.
- Conduct periodic inspections and maintenance on vehicles and equipment as recommended by the manufacturer.

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 20<sup>th</sup> work-related fatality in Washington State during the year 2002 and was the 4<sup>th</sup> construction fatality of the year.

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*This bulletin was developed at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to alert employers and employees in a timely manner of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State. We encourage you to consider the above information as you make safety decisions for or recommendations to your company or constituency. The information in this notice is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.*

Developed by the Washington State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) and Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) Programs at the WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. For more information, contact the Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program, 1-888-667-4277, <http://www.lni.wa.gov/sharp/face>.