

# Fatality Narrative

## Laborer Run-Over by Backing Dump Truck\*

**Industry:** Highway and street construction

**Occupation:** Laborer

**Task:** Laying string line on pavement

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On August 23, 2006, a laborer died, when he was backed-over by a dump truck. The 26-year-old victim had four years experience as a road paving laborer and had been employed by his current employer for the past three months. The day of the fatal incident was sunny and the victim was working on a paving project on a two-lane county road. One lane of the road was open to traffic and the other was being used as a staging area for the paving operation, where dump trucks were dropping their trailers. The victim and a co-worker had been laying, or tacking, a string line down the center of the road and using paint to mark the pavement so as to guide the crew laying asphalt and ensure its proper alignment. The coworker was called away and the victim stood up and waited for another worker to take his place laying string. At this moment, a dump truck that had just dropped its trailer began backing up toward the victim, who had his back turned away from the truck. The dump truck driver was backing down the lane avoiding his parked trailer and the live-traffic lane, but he did not see the victim who was in his blind spot. The victim was struck and run over by the reversing dump truck. He died at the scene of his injuries. The victim had been wearing a class 2 safety vest, yellow pants, hard hat and was using earplugs. The dump truck's back-up alarm was found to be working.



### Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by code)

- ! If employees are in the backing zone or could reasonably be expected to enter the area, the truck must be backed up only when there is: an observer signaling when it is safe to back up; or has a device such as a video camera that provides the driver with a full view of the area behind the dump truck.
- ! The employer needs to make sure job assignments do not place a worker in the backing zone of a dump truck or other construction vehicle, unless a spotter / observer is present.
- ! Dump truck drivers working in construction zones must determine that no one is currently in the backing zone.
- ! All dump trucks must have an operable automatic back-up alarm.
- ! Train all site workers (employees and subcontractors) to recognize and communicate to one another about the hazards associated with moving vehicles and equipment in the work zone.
- Backup Collision avoidance systems should be installed on vehicles. Backup collision avoidance systems can help alert drivers of workers on foot in blind spots behind their vehicles.
- The safe coordination of workers-on-foot and construction vehicles is an important part of the work site safety process. Help in managing the process can be accomplished by having an Internal Traffic Control Plan adequately communicated to workers.
- An Internal Traffic Control Plan can help identify critical areas in traffic and pedestrian flow within the work site and help alert workers and site supervisor when additional safety measures are needed such as a spotter / observer or the placement of physical barriers to separate vehicles from workers, for example.

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 54<sup>th</sup> out of 81 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2006, and was the 13<sup>th</sup> out of 23 construction-related fatalities.

*\*This bulletin was developed at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to alert employers and employees of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State. 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.*

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