

FATALITY NARRATIVE

Two Dump Truck Drivers Die When Their Trucks Crash Head-on

Industry: Highway and Street Construction
Task: Driving dump truck hauling gravel
Occupation: Truck driver
Type of Incident: Motor vehicle

Incident Date: May 28, 2014
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Incident scene showing the straight stretch of road where the two dump trucks collided head-on when one of them crossed over the center line into the oncoming truck's lane. (Photo courtesy: Grant County Sheriff's Office)

In May of 2014, two dump truck drivers died when their trucks struck each other head-on. The drivers, ages 45 and 53, were employed by the same road construction company. They were both experienced truck drivers who held class A commercial driver's licenses. On the day of the incident, the two drivers were hauling gravel for a road construction project. The weather was fair. At 9:30 a.m., the two drivers were driving their trucks along a two-lane road in opposite directions; one was loaded going to the project and the other empty going to pick up a load of gravel. As the two trucks approached each other, one of the trucks crossed over

the center line and veered into the lane of the oncoming truck. The trucks collided head-on and burst into flames. Both drivers died at the scene. The driver of the truck that veered from his lane was found to have three different prescription drugs in his system. The manufacturer of each of these drugs, one was a pain killer and two were sedatives, caution that these drugs may cause drowsiness or other types of mental impairment and should not be used while operating a motor vehicle. Investigators were unable to determine what caused the driver to lose control of his vehicle or if drugs were a contributing factor.

Requirements

- Establish programs designed to help prevent accidents and injuries resulting from the misuse of alcohol or use of controlled substances by drivers of commercial vehicles. See [CFR 382 Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use and Testing](#)
- Prohibit employees under the influence of alcohol or narcotics from the worksite. See [WAC 296-800-11025](#) (Prescription drugs as directed by a doctor are allowed if the employee is not a danger to themselves or others.)
- Establish policies addressing employee substance abuse and use of prescription drugs, and include these in the company accident prevention program. See [WAC 296-800-140](#) and [WAC 296-155-110](#)

Recommendations

- When using prescription medications for health conditions, be aware of the side effects of these medications. Taking more than one medication at a time may increase the possible side effects.
- Employees should notify their supervisor if they are taking any legal medication that may impair their ability to operate a vehicle or equipment.
- New-hire prescreening and after-hire random drug testing policies should be implemented and enforced for substance abuse.

Resources

- Drug and Alcohol Testing Program, U.S. Department of Transportation. <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/drug-alcohol-testing-program>

This narrative was developed to alert employers and employees of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State and 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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