

Truck Driver Crushed Between Trailers

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #: 71-182-2019s

REPORT DATE: May 14, 2019

INCIDENT DATE: February 21, 2014

VICTIM: 51 years old

INDUSTRY: General freight trucking

OCCUPATION: Truck driver

SCENE: Truck yard

EVENT TYPE: Crushed between



A 51-year-old truck driver died when his semi-truck and attached trailer rolled backward, crushing him between his trailer and a parked trailer.

The driver had driven semi-trucks for 40 years. He had worked for his employer, a freight trucking company, for 13 years.

On the day of the incident, the driver arrived at a customer truck yard to pick up a flatbed trailer. He backed his truck up to the trailer, alongside another trailer. His truck ended up parked at a slight angle from both trailers. The lot gently sloped downward to the rear of the truck and trailers.

He got out and hooked up the trailer to his truck. He did not set the parking brake. He also did not chock the wheels of his truck or the trailer.

Then he walked around to the passenger side where the trailer's landing gear was located. He stood between the two trailers and began cranking up the landing gear.

When he raised the landing gear, the truck and trailer rolled backward, crushing him between the two trailers.

State investigators found that the driver was not carrying wheel chocks, as the employer did not require their drivers to carry and use chocks when picking up trailers. The drivers used chocks only when loading and unloading trailers at docks.



Photo 1. The driver's truck and trailer after it rolled backward and crushed him against an adjacent trailer.



Photo 2. The pinch point where the driver was crushed between the two trailers.



Photo 3. Close-up view of the pinch point between the two trailers where the driver was crushed while cranking up the trailer's landing gear.

Requirements

- Use wheel chocks when parking a truck on an incline.
See [WAC 296-865-30015](#)
- Develop an Accident Prevention Program (APP) that is effective in practice. See [WAC 296-800-140](#)

Recommendations

- Drivers should always set the truck's parking brake before exiting the cab. Even if there does not appear to be a slope where a vehicle is parked, a small slope can be sufficient to allow a vehicle to roll if no braking systems or wheel chocks are
- As part of your Accident Prevention Program (APP), establish and enforce safety policies and train drivers to recognize the hazard of a vehicle rollaway and to use safe work practices to prevent unintended vehicle movement.

Recommendations

- Make sure that the tractor and trailer are lined up before coupling.
- Make sure trailer wheels are chocked or spring brakes are on.
- Consider installing commercially available warning alarms designed to alert drivers that the truck's parking brake has not been set when they leave the driver's seat or open the cab door.

Resources

Keep Trucking Safe

SHARP Program, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries.

www.keeptruckingsafe.org

This bulletin 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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