

## Driver Crushed by Rollaway Woodchip Truck

### SUMMARY

Around midnight on July 29, 2019, a 45-year-old semi-truck driver was fatally crushed by his woodchip truck when it rolled away. He was loading and hauling woodchips from a sawmill in northeastern Washington State to a pulp mill in southcentral British Columbia. He arrived at the sawmill in Washington after completing the first half of his second and final 160-mile, five-hour trip between the mills. He had been to the sawmill at least 30 times before without incident.

After entering the sawmill site, he drove his truck under a set of overhead bulk storage bins. He loaded his trailer with woodchips from the bins and then drove forward to an adjoining fall protection tarping station. The tarping station had guarded ladders and platforms that gave him safe access to the top of his trailer to level his load. He parked his truck on the paved road under the tarping station. The road had a 2% downgrade. The driver left the truck running and did not set the parking brake before exiting the cab to access the top of the trailer to prepare his load for tarping.

While the driver was walking on top of his load near the back of his trailer, his truck began to roll forward. He ran toward a ladder at the front of the trailer that went down to a walkway behind the tractor. While trying to descend the ladder, he went over the edge of his trailer and fell to the road. The only other driver at the mill left the site without seeing the incident. Almost two hours later, another truck driver entered the site and found the driver fatally crushed under his tractor's left front drive wheels.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Washington State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) investigators concluded that to protect their workers from similar hazards employers should:**

- Install electronic parking brake systems that automatically apply the parking brake when the driver has not set it before exiting the cab.
- Develop APP to have a parking brake and wheel chocking policy with strict requirements for preventing rollaways and unsafe responses.
- Collaborate with owners of remote customer sites outside of their ordinary daily travel range to ensure the sites are safe for their drivers.
- Assist safety supervisors to obtain work visas or hire safety consultants abroad to do safety audits at customer sites in other countries.

**SHARP Publication # 52-52-2022\_summary.** The full version of this investigation report, along with the detailed recommendations and discussions section, can be found at: [www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/files/2022/52\\_52\\_2022\\_ChipTruckRollaway.pdf](http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/files/2022/52_52_2022_ChipTruckRollaway.pdf)



**Woodchip truck that rolled away and crushed driver. The driver parked the truck on a paved road under a tarping station. The road had a 2% downgrade. The driver left the truck running and did not set the parking brake before exiting the cab to access the top of the trailer.**