WASHINGTON State FACE Program
Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation

TRUCKING / CONSTRUCTION
FATALITY NARRATIVE

Driver Dragged and Pinned By Rollaway Dump Truck

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:
71-261-2024

REPORT DATE:
December 9, 2024

INCIDENT DATE:
June 6, 2024

WORKER:
76 years old

INDUSTRY:
Site Preparation Contractors

OCCUPATION:
Dump Truck Driver

SCENE:
Trailer parking area

EVENT TYPE:
Caught between vehicle

Driver was pinned against the hillside.

[For a slideshow version, click here.]

SUMMARY

A 76-year-old truck driver was dragged and pinned when his dump truck rolled away after he unhooked a flatbed trailer. He was employed by an excavation contractor and had 15 years of experience driving dump trucks with trailers.

He drove the truck to his employer's property to drop off the attached trailer. He backed up into a parking spot at the top of a slight incline, set the trailer parking brake, and exited the truck. When he unhooked the trailer, the truck started to roll downhill. He ran after it and got onto the driver's side running board, attempting to get in the cab to stop the truck.

Dump truck at fatality scene.

The front driver's side rolled into a roadway drainage ditch and struck the hillside along the ditch. The driver was thrown off the truck into the narrow space between it and the hillside. He was then dragged until the truck finally stopped 150 feet from the parking area. The employer's son was working nearby and saw he was pinned against the hillside. He called his father and they used an excavator to pull the truck off the driver. They called 911 but found he was already deceased when they tried to render first aid.

Following the incident, investigators found:

- The driver set the trailer brake but not the truck's parking brake before exiting the cab and unhooking the trailer.
- The driver had parked the truck and trailer at the same site many times before.
- The employer's accident prevention program (APP) included state requirements for using parking brakes and wheel chocks at construction sites. Crew safety meeting and job hazard analysis (JHA) were also included as requirements but were not documented to assure hazards were being communicated to workers.

REQUIREMENTS

Employers must:

- Employers must maintain conditions within the workplace that will not endanger the health, safety or welfare of employees. See WAC 296-800-11005

RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators recommend that, to help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Install electronic parking brake systems that automatically apply the parking brake when the driver has not set it before exiting the cab. Alarms are also available that alert drivers when brakes are not set.
- Develop and enforce APP policies including a parking brake and wheel chocking standard operating procedure (SOP) policy that requires drivers to:
  - Put their foot on the service brake and place the transmission in neutral.
  - Set the parking brake and time they park, regardless of whether or not they exit the cab.
  - Stop the engine, lock the ignition, and remove the key and place it in their pocket.
  - Turn the truck's front wheels to the curb or side of the road and chock at least one tractor drive wheel on each side if parked on any grade.
  - Never to pursue or try to stop a rollaway truck if outside the cab.
- Train all drivers and periodically test their parking brake and wheel chocking SOP knowledge and skills. Document training for each driver and keep records up to date.

RESOURCES

Hazard Alert with tips to prevent truck rollaways – Washington State FACE program

SHARP Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or the cause of the injury. Developed by WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. The FACE Program is supported in part by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# 5U60OH008487). For more information visit www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face.