

Company Co-owner Backed Over by Work Truck

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #: 71-247-2023s

REPORT DATE: November 6, 2023

INCIDENT DATE: July 17, 2023

WORKER: 39 years old

INDUSTRY: New Single Family
Construction

OCCUPATION: Construction Business
Co-Owner

SCENE: Commercial construction site

EVENT TYPE: Struck by vehicle



FATALITY NARRATIVE



A 39-year-old co-owner of a construction company died after being run over by a backing work truck. He worked for his family's business for 17 years, including the last eight years as a co-owner. He worked on large civil projects, splitting his duties as a project manager, foreman, and laborer.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



The co-owner arrived in the morning to work on a levee maintenance project. Workers were getting ready to remove topsoil before excavating the site. He parked his pickup truck and got out on the dirt road. The site superintendent drove up to him in a commercial heavy-duty, chassis cab work truck.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



The co-owner got in the work truck and drove with the superintendent to a spot nearby. The superintendent asked the co-owner to get out and walk back to his pickup truck to make room for another worker who arrived and got in. The superintendent then started backing to a turnaround area on the side of the road. He backed about 100 feet when a dump truck driver behind him yelled over the radio for him to stop

FATALITY NARRATIVE



His passenger told him he had backed over the co-owner. The superintendent hit the brakes, got out of the truck, and found the co-owner lying face down under it. He called 911, who told him to pull the co-owner out and start CPR. Several workers came to comfort the badly injured man, trying to keep him alive. First responders arrived quickly, but he died at the scene.

Following the incident, investigators found:

- The co-owner was wearing a hi-visibility vest, but the superintendent and passenger still did not see him in the truck's side and rear view mirrors or sense when he was struck.
- A steel tube headache rack and fuel transfer tank hose reel on the truck's flatbed deck partially obstructed visibility through the rear cab window.
- The work truck had not been inspected annually as required by federal motor carrier safety regulations.



Photo 1. Heavy-duty work truck that backed over company co-owner.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



Photo 2. Rear view of partially obstructed rear cab window.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



Photo 3. Visibility through the truck's rear view mirror was partially obstructed by a steel tube headache rack and fuel transfer tank hose reel that were mounted on the flatbed deck.

Requirements

Employers must:

- When operating vehicles on construction sites, other than passenger cars and pickups, with an obstructed view to the rear: You must prohibit the use of any motor vehicle equipment that has an obstructed view to the rear unless the vehicle meets one of the following:
 - Has an operable automatic reverse signal alarm audible above the surrounding noise level and audible no less than 15 feet from the rear of the vehicle;
 - Or is backed up when an observer signals that it is safe to do so. See [WAC 296-155-610 \(2e\)](#)
- Comply with annual commercial motor vehicle inspection requirements according to [49 CFR 396.17](#).

Recommendations

FACE investigators concluded that to help prevent similar occurrences employers should:

- Create and enforce vehicle backing safety policies in their accident prevention program (APP) that:
 - Drivers maintain clear visibility of workers on foot. When visibility is lost, drivers should stop and not resume movement until visibility is re-established.
 - Workers stay out of backing zones unless trained and acting as an observer signaling the driver.
 - Prohibit workers on foot from using radios or phones when crossing roads when there is vehicle traffic.
- Increase availability of vehicle turnaround areas on construction site roads to minimize backing distances.

Resources

[Internal Traffic Control Planning Guide](#)

American Road & Transportation Builders Association

FATALITY NARRATIVE



This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident 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 injury.

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