

TOOLBOX TALKS

General Health & Safety

Truck Driving: Hazards On and Off the Road

Transporting goods and materials by truck is a huge business. It is estimated that there are more than 3.5 million truck drivers in the United States according to the American Trucking Association. The employees in this occupation experience many injuries and illnesses on the job. It is important to focus on not only the hazards faced while driving, but the other hazards associated with this occupation as well.



Injuries and Illnesses in Truck Driving

There are more fatalities experienced in truck driving than in many other industries. In a publication put out by the Bureau of Labor Statistics they reported that 756 truck drivers lost their lives on the job and over 65,000 drivers suffered injuries that required days away from work in 2012. The causes for the days away from work cases for tractor trailer drivers in this study were:

- Overexertion and bodily reaction (35%)
- Slips, trips, falls (30%)
- Contact with other object or equipment (17%)
- Transportation related injuries (14%)

The injuries suffered by drivers of delivery trucks experienced a similar percentage of the same injuries as the tractor trailer operators.

Best Practices in Avoiding Injuries

While there are many variables you can control on the road as well as while unloading equipment or materials as a driver, there are many variables that are outside of your full control such as other drivers and weather conditions. It is important to account for these

different hazards and make choices that help mitigate them. Some safeguards and best practices for job tasks outside the cab are:

- Take care of your **physical shape and health**. Due to the nature of the job, many truck drivers do not get enough physical activity which puts them at a risk for injury when unloading materials.
- Stretch or do some kind of warm up before engaging in heavy physical lifting. You put your body at risk for injury when you overexert after long periods of rest. Ask for help when lifting awkward or heavy loads.
- Take note of the conditions of your walking surfaces as well as in or on your trailer. Wear proper footwear that is slip resistant and supports your ankles. Safety toe boots will also protect your feet in case of a **dropped object**.
- Park in areas away from traffic when unloading. There are many times when truck drivers are struck by other drivers. Wear a reflective orange vest as well anytime you are outside of your truck in an area where traffic is present.
- Wear gloves and keep hands out of pinch points.

Summary

While many fatalities and injuries are caused while actually driving a truck, many injuries occur outside the cab as well. Controlling the hazards that you are able to control and making informed decisions to mitigate those hazards outside of your control can help to ensure you go home healthy. Evaluate what risks you are taking next time you are unloading equipment or materials.

DISCUSSION

Questions from staff

Comments by staff

Suggestions from staff

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Date		Facilitator Name:	
Site/Department:		Facilitator Signature:	
Topic:			

The information in this document had been explained to me and I understand the content

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