Bungee Straps and Eye Balls

Unless you have heard about it before or have had it happen to you, most drivers are not aware of the danger associated with using bungee straps for securing tarps and other items of freight. After all, they are just big rubber bands with hooks on each end – right? That is an accurate description of a bungee strap, but it does not really describe the hazard that these straps and hooks present, especially to your face!

John learned that lesson the hard and painful way several months ago when a strap he was pulling came loose and hit him in his left eye. What hit his eye was the metal hook, and that made it even worse. His injury resulted in unbelievable pain, temporary loss of vision, multiple trips to the doctor and NO TRIPS DOWN THE ROAD IN HIS TRUCK. John has not been able to drive since his injury. Whether or not he will ever be medically qualified to drive again has yet to be determined.

John still endures some pain (eye injuries are known for pain and discomfort). He continues to make several trips to the doctor for treatment (undoubtedly a hassle), and he lives with the possibility that he may never be able to perform the type of job that he loved (very depressing). How could this type of injury be prevented? That is a question that John considers several times a day, during the several days/weeks/months that it is taking him to physically recover from his injury.

LIFE LESSON

These injuries can be prevented. Had John followed the four recommendations listed below, he probably would not be in pain, walking around with a patch on his left eye and wondering if he will ever be able to drive a commercial truck again. Think about it – John is.

1) Always anticipate the fact that a bungee strap could break or slip. This will keep you alert to the hazard associated with using these straps.

2) Physically inspect all bungee straps prior to use. Look for cuts or tears in the rubber and bent or extended hooks.

3) Turn the hooks away from the tarp or item of freight. This reduces the chance that the hook will slip.

4) Pull the bungee straps away from your body/face. If the hook slips or if the strap snaps then it will “zing” right past your head and you will then realize how lucky you are. But, you will also realize the importance of following established, safe procedures.