

REAL LIFE LESSONS

FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



BEWARE WHERE YOU STEP

It really does not matter what type of trailer you pull behind you, or even if you drive a box truck, - all drivers will eventually face the challenge of securing the load or tarping the load or both. This is true even if the load is “no touch” because something inevitably happens and you have to climb on the freight to get the task accomplished. This places you at risk of injury due to working at heights, but it also increases your chance of injury for other reasons, which is what happened to Clarence and Jason. Neither one of them sustained the same injury, but each injury was the result of similar circumstances.

Clarence has pulled flats for years and he is proud of it. Relating to the freight has been a physical challenge that he welcomed because he likes “work.” For almost every load he has had to climb onto his trailer and tarp or secure the load. On one such occasion last fall he was standing on the freight itself and needed to step down and over just a few feet. He looked down and saw what appeared to be a portion of the freight so he stepped on it. Unfortunately, what Clarence saw was known as a void. Because of the shadows he thought it was a portion of the freight and something he could stand on, but it wasn't. He put his full weight on “nothing” and then fell between the pallets. His left leg broke right in two.

Jason's situation was a little different. He was inside a van that was partially loaded and he also needed to stand on the freight to get a load lock positioned. As he did the pallet of freight wobbled, which caused him to lose his balance and fall to the floor of the trailer. Jason reached out to brace himself for the impact with the floor and that is when his left arm broke right in two.

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Two drivers, two falls, two broken bones and too much time away from work while those bones healed. What's the lesson to be learned from these injuries? The quick answer is that freight is not necessarily a stable platform upon which to stand. But are there other considerations? Yes.....

- 1) Lighting conditions can be less than satisfactory and that may create “false” visions – the appearance of something that really isn't there. Beware where you step.
- 2) Some freight (probably most freight) is a stable platform upon which to stand, but it needs to be checked prior to standing on it just in case it has loosened up. Beware where you stand.