

REAL LIFE LESSONS

FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



ICE – THE ENEMY OF THE TRUCK DRIVER

Although snow is no friend to truck drivers, ice is the true enemy. It often hides from us, even though it is right in front of our eyes. It catches us by surprise and seems intent on bringing us harm. Whether in your truck or on your feet, ice can cause you to lose complete control and end-up seriously injured. That was a lesson that Mary Ann learned last winter.

Mary Ann arrived at a shipper's facility. Once there, she dropped her empty trailer and backed-under a loaded trailer. While she was cranking the trailer dollies, she slipped on a patch of ice and fell forward. Her elbow struck the ice-covered ground with such force that it literally shattered the joint. There she was, writhing in pain and rolling on the ground beside her trailer. And there was nobody who was even aware that she had fallen. After a few minutes she made her way to the cell phone in her truck and called for help.

Although Mary Ann's injury was more severe than the average slip/fall on ice injury, the truth is that once you start to fall, luck (good or bad) is largely what determines the extent of your injuries.

Some drivers just call ice an unavoidable occupational hazard and hope for the best. However there are several things that you can do to keep you on your feet when there is ice on the ground (or when you suspect there is ice on the ground).

One of those things is to use strap-on traction aids, such as the ones that can be found at ShoelceCleats.com. Similar to studded winter weather automobile tires, strap-on traction aids are effective in preventing falls on ice and are often used by joggers who don't let winter weather stop them from their hobby. Strap-on traction aids are quick and easy to put on and take off; fit into your jacket pocket when you're not using them; and are likely the best defense against ice.

If you don't take the above advice and wear strap-on traction aids, try to prevent slips and fall on ice by taking shorter steps and trying to plant your whole foot gently down instead of using the typical heel strike that we normally use when we're walking.

Lastly, make sure that both of your hands are holding on to something **before** you step on or off your truck cab steps, catwalk or trailer ICC bar. After all, for drivers many falls on ice happen as the driver is stepping on or off of his truck or trailer.