

REAL LIFE LESSONS

FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



NOT BUILT TO CLIMB

Jim worked for a general freight trucking company, and pulled dry van trailers. Although his company hauled only “driver no-touch freight,” drivers for his company were still responsible for placing load straps or load locks behind the freight to prevent the freight from shifting in transit. Most of the time, this was a fairly simple process. He would walk into his trailer from the dock; position the load locks behind the freight and that was it. However, occasionally he picked-up a load from a shipper that would not (under any circumstances) permit drivers on their docks. In those situations, he had to pull away from the dock; climb into the back of this trailer; position the load locks; and then climb back down.

Unfortunately, neither Jim, nor the trailers he pulled were built to climb. Jim was – well let’s just say a little on the heavy side. The trailers he pulled were standard 53 ft. dry van trailers. They had a typical ICC bar and no grab-rail to assist in climbing.

One day last February Jim was at one of those shippers that would not permit him on the dock. After his trailer was loaded, he pulled away from the dock and climbed into the back of the trailer with both trailer doors still open. Although getting into the trailer wasn’t exactly easy for Jim, he did it. Getting down was a different story. In the process of trying to get down out of the trailer, Jim fell backwards and landed flat on his back. Luckily someone on the dock saw him and came to his aid.

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Every accident can be viewed as a learning experience. So we asked Jim what he learned from this incident, and what he plans to do differently when presented with a similar situation in the future. He admitted that he should have done a few things a little differently. From now on, Jim said, *“I’ll try to convince the shipper to let me put the load locks in from the dock, so I don’t have to climb. If that doesn’t work,”* Jim said, *“after I pull away from the dock, I’ll close the left trailer door and hold onto it when I climb in and out of the trailer.”* Jim added, *“I might even try to shed a few pounds.”*

We have one more suggestion for Jim (and for all drivers who must occasionally climb in and out of dry van, reefer or curtain-site trailers) – invest in a product that makes that task safer and easier. A couple products currently available including the Tailgate Master Truck Steps (which requires no mounting brackets be installed on the trailer). That product and several others that require trailer-mounted brackets can be found at http://truckingworkerscomp.com/safety_devices.