

# REAL LIFE LESSONS

## FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



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### OUT YOU GO!

If you drive a truck and pull a trailer, regardless of what type, you are going to have the opportunity, requirement or need to get on or in that trailer – and that can prove to be very dangerous. This real life lesson describes an injury sustained by a driver who was pulling a dry van trailer, but the circumstances and potential outcome are similar for all drivers no matter what type of trailer they are climbing on, into or out of.

George was a new employee driver with his company (only four months), but he had years of driving experience. Unfortunately, that experience did not protect him from a serious injury last fall. He had received a live load in his van trailer at a busy warehouse. He pulled away from the dock to close his trailer doors and then determined that it would be best to install an e-strap to secure the freight. After doing so he started to squat and then sit and slide out of the trailer. However, as he began to squat his feet shot out from under him and he subsequently fell out of the trailer landing in the parking lot first on his left foot and then on his hands and knees.

Yes, he did fracture his left ankle and put some pretty nasty cuts on the palms of his hands and on each knee cap. His cuts healed much quicker than his ankle. George had to wear a soft cast for three months and then participate in physical therapy. During that time period he was not medically cleared to return to driving, so he was not only “hobbled” he was also temporarily disabled to do what he loved to do.

### REAL LIFE LESSON

There are several issues to consider in George’s situation. Each deserves thought.

- 1) Why not just accomplish all necessary tasks inside the trailer prior to pulling away from the dock? That way you can easily, and safely, enter/exit the trailer from/to the dock and then walk down the dock steps. This eliminates the need to jump.
- 2) Why not exit/dismount from a trailer the same way you should exit/dismount from the cab of your truck – facing it while using three points of contact? It’s the same concept that involves one hand and two feet or two hands and one foot. Anytime you do otherwise your body becomes unstable and off balance.
- 3) And what about footwear? Drivers often twist their ankles while entering/exiting the truck cab or the trailer for several reasons, including: the momentum of their body; the fact that they are reaching with one foot; and the absence of a boot that laces above the ankle.