

REAL LIFE LESSONS

FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



VERY EXPENSIVE COFFEE

There's nothing as good as a cup of hot coffee. It can rejuvenate your mind and your body. In fact, it can even improve your driving skills (to a point). Most often the process of a driver getting a cup of coffee is also beneficial because it temporarily provides a break from driving. In addition, it offers the opportunity to stretch your legs and to personally interact with other humans. All of these are beneficial. But did you ever think about how dangerous a cup of coffee can be?

Most of us recall the famous lawsuit involving a McDonald's customer and a burn injury that resulted from spilling that hot coffee. It seems that the cost of that cup of coffee was close to \$1 million. Not nearly that expensive, a cup of coffee that Caleb bought last fall greatly exceeded the national average cost of a cup of coffee. The cost of this cup of coffee is one that he will most likely never forget.

Caleb was on the last few hours of an extended dispatch and was scheduled to arrive back at the company's drop lot within three hours. He was anxious to get home and go to a family gathering later that evening. Consuming a cup of hot coffee seemed like a good idea because it would pump him up. So, he pulled off at a truck stop to get a cup. That's when his luck turned bad.

When he returned to his truck Caleb violated one of the golden rules of trucking – always use three points of contact when entering and exiting your truck. Instead of placing his cup of coffee on the floorboard of the truck Caleb held on to it and this caused him to become unstable as he attempted to climb into his truck. Predictably, he lost his balance and fell backwards onto the pavement, subsequently spilling his hot cup of coffee on himself and fracturing his left arm.

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The more significant injury suffered by Caleb was not the spilled coffee but rather his broken arm. That ailment kept him from being able to work (drive) for two months. He had been making around \$4,200 a month, so he lost about \$8,400 of salary. Yes, he did receive temporary lost wages through the company's worker's compensation insurance policy, but it was less than he could have earned driving his truck. In addition, his personal life had to be modified as well. He did not make it to the family gathering and he could not do a lot of other things around the house for a while. So, at face value, Caleb's hot cup of coffee cost about \$8,400. But the hidden costs were even more.

What's the lesson in all of this? 1) Haste makes waste. Take your time getting back into your truck. 2) Always use three points of contact when you enter or exit your truck. Regardless of what it is, place it on the floorboard prior to entering your truck. It won't get dirty and you won't get hurt.