

Safety and health alert

21/96 Operator crushed by truck tipper body

Incident

A truck driver was killed in April 1996 while preparing his truck for a day's work. He had started the engine and after running it for a short time, turned the key off. The engine had a turbo timer fitted and it was set for two minutes, therefore the engine continued to run for two minutes.

The previous day, the driver had been working on his truck and had left the tipper body raised approximately one metre.

Because the hydraulics were air activated, the tipper body would not descend until air was replenished in the reservoirs.

The driver, who was known to be very safety-conscious, must have been momentarily distracted and was trapped under the tipper body when it commenced its descent. As he attempted to back out, it appears the tipper body footrest knocked him forward and trapped him between the chassis rail and the descending tipper body.

Factors

1. The driver left the tipper body raised without chocking or fixing the tipper body in the up position.
2. The driver, for some unexplained reason, placed himself in a high hazard situation just as the tipper body came down.
3. The driver was working alone, and when the hazard was identified, appears to have withdrawn swiftly but was deflected back into the hazard zone by the footrest behind him.

Recommendations

1. No work or inspections should ever be attempted between a raised tipper body and the truck's chassis rails without the tipper body being positively supported in the raised position.
2. A system of work must be in place that ensures that if a lapse of concentration occurs a person cannot be entrapped under a falling tipper body.
3. The tipper body should never be left unattended in the raised position without some support additional to the hydraulics.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

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