

Safety and health alert

12/97 Dangers of carrying equipment under the tray of a truck

Incident

A driver and a co-worker were injured at Brigadoon in June 1997 when the truck they were travelling in failed to negotiate a 90° left hand bend at the bottom of a steep hill. The truck had lost the use of its braking system while travelling down the hill. The driver and co-worker both sustained injuries as a result of the truck rolling over.

Investigations revealed that the company involved in laying asphalt transported steel straight edges and wooden planks under the tray of a Hino truck. The straight edges and plank were pushed into a gap between the chassis members and the underside of the tray. This practice resulted in a steel hydraulic brake pipe being damaged to the point that it leaked hydraulic fluid.

Factors

1. Equipment was carried in a part of the vehicle not designed for the purpose, and over time, damaged a hydraulic brake pipe.
2. The maintenance schedule did not include a visual examination of the hydraulic brake pipe beneath the tray.
3. The driver did not use the hand brake to slow the vehicle down.
4. Attempts to put the vehicle in a lower gear failed, resulting in the vehicle not utilizing the engine as a brake.

Recommendations

1. Equipment should not be carried beneath the tray of a truck without specific provisions being made.
2. Special holders, trays or boxes should be provided when carrying equipment below the tray of the vehicle.
3. If equipment has been carried beneath the tray of a truck, visual checks should be made to ensure wear or damage has not occurred to adjacent cables or pipes.

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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