



IT REALLY HAPPENED

Summer 2017

True Stories, Real Truck Drivers, Serious Injuries

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Get a grip – don't slip

A 36-year-old, local flatbed driver suffered a broken ankle when he lost hold of a grab handle and slipped down the steps from his tractor's catwalk.

The incident occurred as the driver prepared to haul a load of heavy construction equipment.

He had just connected his tractor to a lowboy trailer, and was starting the required pre-trip vehicle safety inspection. After checking the air hoses and electrical connectors at the rear of the cab, the driver turned to climb down from the catwalk using steps attached to a side-mounted fuel tank.



He clamped his hand around a grab handle on the headache rack to support himself down the steps, but the handle's odd mounting location broke his grasp. Unable to maintain 3-points of contact, the driver slipped, and his foot became trapped in the steps. X-rays of his swollen right ankle revealed a fractured bone. The injury resulted in direct costs of over \$26,000 and left the driver and his employer unsure about his return to work.



Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

The Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis (TIRES) project developed this narrative to alert trucking industry employers and employees of a serious injury of a worker in Washington State. The narrative is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the injury.

TIRES is a project of the Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) program at the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries. The project is supported in part by a grant from the CDC/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# U60 OH008487). For more information and free training resources, contact the SHARP program at: 1-888-667-4277, or visit:

KeepTruckingSafe.org

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TIPS TO LIVE BY

Management

- Work with all drivers and associates to identify grab handle mounting locations that allow a firm, continuous full-hand grasp while climbing steps.
- Often check the injury prevention performance of grab handles, headache racks, and slip-resistant catwalks and steps.
- Provide training based on Job Hazard Assessments that shows drivers how to safely conduct required DOT vehicle inspections.

Drivers

- Make sure grab handles, catwalk, and steps are securely mounted, clean, and serviceable.
- Use 3-points of contact facing vehicle, holding firmly onto grab handles, gaining stable, balanced footing, and climbing all steps.
- Wear sturdy, slip-resistant footwear with good traction.

All Employees

- Actively look for hazards and share injury prevention ideas with management.