

Dump truck dangers

Stay away from backing vehicles

The accident: Two dump truck drivers in a work zone were instructed to switch trucks. One of the drivers exited his truck and walked to the rear towards the other vehicle. The second driver got into the truck, shifted the truck into reverse and struck the first driver.

The bottom line: A post-accident investigation determined the first driver was carrying personal items including clothing and newspapers, and realized he had dropped an item behind his originally assigned truck. He walked behind the truck and bent over to retrieve his belongings as the second driver checked his mirrors. The second driver noted seeing the driver pass the rear of the truck in the passenger side mirror. He placed the truck in reverse and began to back the truck just as the first driver walked behind the truck again, striking and then running over the driver. The driver was transported to the hospital where he died two weeks later from his injuries.



Illustration by Don Lomax

Backing basics

Although both drivers had completed comprehensive safety training, backing protocols were not used in this case. Before backing a vehicle or piece of equipment on a site or in a work zone, make sure you take appropriate precautions.

- **Ensure a spotter is in place.** Before you enter the vehicle, ask for an experienced spotter to assist you.
- **Look for a signal.** Backing should never begin before you see a signal from the spotter that it is safe to proceed. The signal should be agreed upon in advance and consistent.
- **Stop if you lose sight of the spotter.** If visual contact with the spotter is lost during the backing procedure, come to a complete stop until you reestablish the line of sight.

Foot traffic

If you're on foot, be aware of your surroundings at all times, and take special precautions to avoid the path of vehicles and equipment.

- **Keep clear.** While on foot, stay out of the work area and remain in clear view of operators.
- **Stay alert.** Don't allow yourself to become so accustomed to jobsite noise that you don't hear alerts. When you hear a backup alarm, identify the source and your proximity to it immediately.
- **Be aware of blind spots.** Familiarize yourself with the blind spots of equipment and vehicles you're likely to be working around, and stay out of those areas. For diagrams of blind areas on dump trucks and other equipment, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/highwayworkzones/BAD/imagelookup.html>.

EW0813

Information for this Safety Watch is from an accident report, NIOSH's Highway Work Zone Safety and the Center for Disease Control's NIOSH Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation program. It is meant for general information only.

Date of safety talk: _____ Leader: _____
Attending: _____

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