

In the 'shadow' of an unstable load

The driver was a 67-year-old retired coal miner, Vietnam War veteran and experienced truck driver. He worked in a semi-retired capacity for an equipment rental company and delivered heavy materials, components and machines to construction sites and sometimes helped with the erection of the components. The company was a small, family-owned firm with just five employees. It offered on-the-job and learn-as-you-go training, but had a limited safety program.

On the day of the accident, the driver was delivering a large, commercial elevator assembly on the back of a Class 8 flatbed truck. The load included eight tower sections at the rear of the trailer, an elevator case and cage door in the middle and small tower sections at the front of the trailer.

When the driver arrived at the site, he parked the truck on a slight incline and climbed a ladder to loosen the tie-down straps that secured the cage door. He descended the ladder and was standing on the pavement rolling up the strap when a crane operator designated to pick the load off the truck saw the cage door start to move. The crane operator jumped out of his cab and began running toward the driver to warn him. But before he could get the driver's attention, the 1,000-pound

cage door fell off the truck and struck the driver.

The crane operator called 911 and, with the assistance of two other workers, lifted the cage door off the driver. The driver was still breathing when the medical responders arrived but died later from his injuries.

How this accident could have been prevented:

- Train employees not to stand in the "shadow" or fall zone of any unsecured equipment on a truck or platform.
- A spotter should watch the loads when others are loading or unloading equipment and warn them of shifting equipment or other anomalies.
- Employers should develop

workplace safety guidelines for securing loads while loading and unloading.

- Employers should educate drivers and others who assist in loading or unloading trucks in the proper method for securing loads to prevent shifting during transport.
- Employers should implement a comprehensive safety program and provide training that includes hazard recognition and avoidance.
- All this training should be mandatory for new employees and supplemented with refresher courses.

For more information on this accident, its causes and preventive measures, visit: <https://bit.ly/2qSd8f5>.

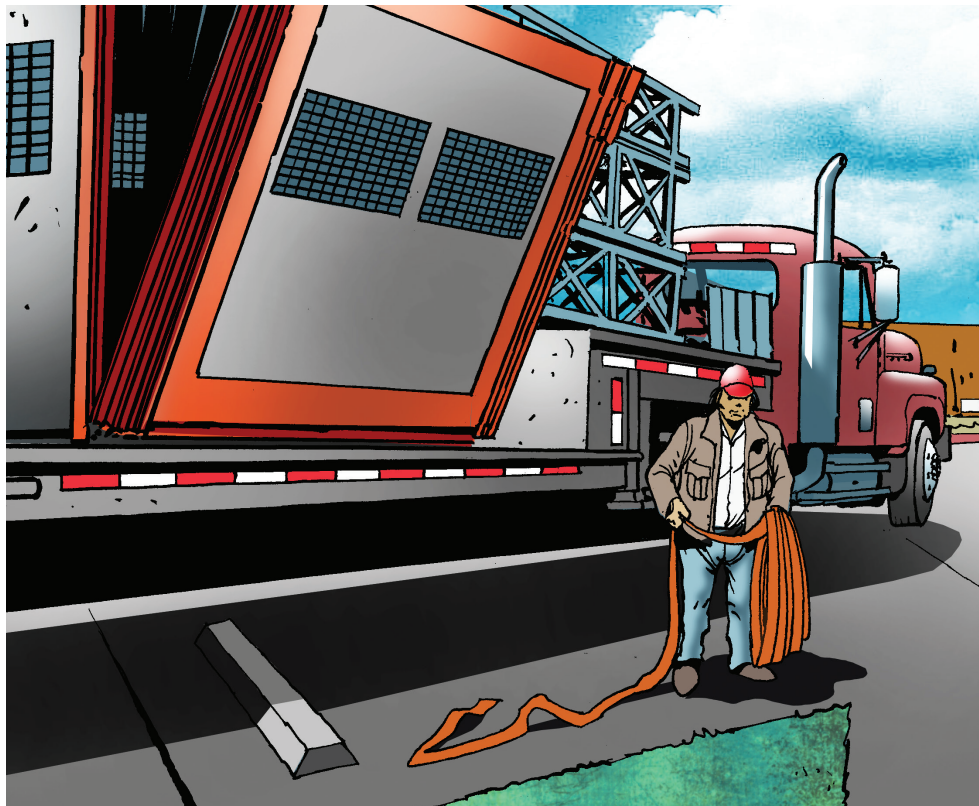


Illustration by Don Lomax



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