



Illustration by Don Lomax

One lock, not enough

It was a simple job – excavate and prepare a 15-acre site for an addition to a landfill using dozers, excavators and articulated trucks. The victim was a Mexican national whose primary language was Spanish, as was true for about 20 of the company's employees. Although several employees were bilingual and tasked with conveying information to the Spanish speakers, neither the site foreman, superintendent nor company owner spoke Spanish. The company had no written safety policies in either language.

The victim was assigned to drive an articulated truck. The truck drivers were given a few days of training from an experienced driver, but the content and length of the victim's training were not documented.

Near the end of the shift, the victim drove to the service area to lubricate the articulated truck using an air-powered grease gun on a service truck. No one observed the

accident, but investigators believe the victim raised the dump bed on the artic to access a grease zerk that was covered by the body of the bed when it was in the down position. During this procedure, the dump body should have been locked in the raised position by a hydraulically actuated tipping control lever in the cab and a solid metal bar lock secured with a cotter pin at the rear of the truck.

Evidence suggests that the driver did not engage the rear locking device, and the tipping control lever in the cab either was not engaged or was dislodged. When the driver reached between the frame and bed of the truck, the bed fell and crushed him against the frame. EMS personnel transported the victim to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead.

How this accident could have been prevented:

- Truck drivers and equipment op-

erators should be given training in their native language.

- Training should cover all aspects of the machine – not just operation – but routine maintenance as well.
- Companies should have written safety policies and convey them in whatever language or languages the crews speak. Keep in mind that some crew members may lack the reading skills to understand written instruction, in which case the policies and procedures should be communicated verbally.
- Supervisors should hold weekly tailgate safety meetings to review the safety issues on the site.
- Supervisors should put OEM-supplied printed manuals that detail operating and safety instructions in every truck and piece of equipment and ensure that operators and drivers are familiar with the manuals.

For more details on this accident, see: www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/In-house/full200208.html

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