

Case 41. 50-year-old truck driver died after being knocked off a tanker by an exploding hatch lid.

On June 11, 2003, a 50-year-old truck driver/bulk lime deliveryman died after being knocked off of a tanker by an exploding dome-shaped hatch lid. The victim's job was to transport and deliver bulk lime to a water department. He used a pneumatic trailer to transport and deliver the lime. When the semi tractor is running, the airlines to the tanker are filled with air, pressurizing the tanker to no more than 15 psi. On the day of the incident, it appears as though there was a problem with the lime pumping from the tanker. It is believed that the victim climbed on top of the tanker to check the seals on the hatches. Operators stated that they sometimes have to work on the hatches to reposition or replace seals, tighten latches, or resecure them. He may have attempted to open the pressurized tanker's hatch lid or simply manipulate latches to achieve a better seal while the semi tractor was running. Before manipulating or opening any fitting, coupling or other openings, the company's procedure required shutting down the blower and decompressing the equipment. However, victim did not follow this procedure. The lid apparently blew off as the victim attempted to manipulate it and struck the victim, knocking him off the tanker. He fell 15 feet to the concrete. A delivery site worker found the victim on the ground approximately 10 feet from the trailer with lime blowing out of the open top trailer hatch. The victim was not wearing eye protection or fall protection. He was taken to the hospital and died approximately two weeks later.

MIOSHA issued the following "Serious" citations to the employer:

1. The employer did not provide or enforce the use of fall protection for the purpose of working on the forward hatches of pneumatic trailers at the sites other than loading platforms, exposing employees to possible falls of 15-feet to hard surface or ground. (Act 154 , PA of 1974, Sec 11(a))
2. The employees were not wearing eye protection while working on pneumatic conveyor lines and hoses and pressurized vessels. (Personal Protective Equipment, Part 33, Rule 3312(1))