

Case 473. 60-year-old tow truck operator died when a disabled bus fell onto him.

A 60-year-old male tow truck operator died when a disabled bus fell onto him. The bus driver tried to start the bus and it kept stalling out, so the driver called for a tow. The bus was located in the far right lane of an exit ramp with a slight downhill grade toward the stop sign at the end of the ramp. The bus driver stated that the decedent never entered the bus prior to raising the front end. The decedent raised the front end of the bus and placed a stack of two wood blocks under each tire. The bottom (base) blocks were both 13-inches long by 6 inches wide by 4 inches high. One 9-inch long by 4-inch wide by 3-inch high block was placed on the top of one 13-inch block and one 7¼-inch long by 3½-inch wide by 3-inch high block was placed on the top of the other 13-inch block. The decedent did not engage the bus's emergency brake, place the bus in gear, or chock the tires. There was no means of secondary support. The bus driver did not know if the bus was in neutral or in gear. The decedent lifted the front of the bus with the tow truck boom. Under each raised tire, he placed the 2-block high stack of wood block. He lowered the wheels onto the blocks. The decedent was partially under the front of the bus looking for attachment points on the undercarriage to connect the wrecker hook when the bus rolled off of the blocks and fell on top of him. The bus rolled approximately 10 feet uphill when it rolled off the support blocks. When the bus began to roll, the bus driver jumped onto it and applied the emergency brake. The decedent was transported by EMS to a local hospital where he died. The tow truck used by the decedent on the incident day was equipped with two rubber wheel chocks for the tires and four jack stands.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious violations to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation.

SERIOUS: GENERAL PROVISIONS, GI PART 1, RULE 408.10034(12): An employee shall not place his/her body beneath equipment, such as vehicles, machines, or materials, supported only by a jack, overhead hoist, chain fall, or any other temporary single supporting means, unless safety stands, blocks or other support system capable of supporting the total imposed weights is used to protect the employee in case of failure of the supporting system.

Tow truck employee sustained a fatal head injury on *date* when he was in the process of inspecting the front underside of a disabled *bus* in preparation of towing from the off-ramp at *location* exit. Employee had raised the front end of the bus and set wood blocks under each tire, 2 high, with no secondary means of support. The vehicle rolled off the supports and struck the tow truck driver in the head when he was partially under the raised load looking at attachments points. (*MIFACE removed identifiers*)