

Case 536. 59-year-old male owner of a barn restoration company died when a fifth-wheel dump lowered and pinned him against the trailer frame due to a hydraulic line leak.

A 59-year-old male owner of a barn restoration company died when a fifth-wheel dump box lowered and pinned him against the trailer frame due to a hydraulic line leak. The firm had begun dismantling a barn and had loaded the 5th-wheel, 18-foot long dump trailer with construction debris. The trailer/dump box was ready to be emptied, so the decedent and the barn owner drove a pick-up truck with the attached loaded 5th wheel trailer to a local landfill. The decedent backed the truck/trailer to the dumping location. The controls for the dump trailer were on the right side of the gooseneck. After actuating the hydraulics to raise the dump box, the decedent walked back to the rear of the trailer. When the dump box was almost fully raised, a witness noted that a hydraulic hose ruptured, spraying hydraulic fluid all over the driver's side of the pickup and causing the dump box to begin to lower. The decedent ran back to the small hydraulic pump located on the gooseneck to shut it off. The dump box came down, pinning him between the dump box and the trailer frame. A landfill employee blew the horn of the equipment he was operating to warn the decedent of the lowering dump box. Landfill employees, using their equipment, attempted to keep the box from lowering further. Emergency responders were summoned and when they arrived, they used blocks under the trailer box to secure it and remove the decedent. MIOSHA personnel found that the hydraulic hoses for the trailer pump were severely chaffed/weathered and in disrepair.

MIOSHA Construction Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citation at the conclusion of its investigation.

Serious: 408.1011(a): ACT 154, MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT - An employer shall furnish to each employee, employment and a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards that are causing, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to the employee.

The employer did not furnish to each employee, employment and a place of employment, which was free from recognized hazards in that the worker placed his body between the lifted bed of the trailer and the gooseneck of the trailer without a secondary support.

One feasible and acceptable method to correct this violation is to follow General Industry Part 1, General Provisions, Rule 408.100434 (12).