

Case 97. 57-year-old mobile straddle stacker lift operator died from injuries he received from being run over by the wheels of a sliding chassis trailer.

On February 8, 2005, a 57-year-old mobile straddle stacker lift operator died from injuries he received from being run over by the wheels of a sliding chassis trailer. He worked for a trucking service company that served as a depot for storage and reuse of large steel ship containers filled with goods and products to be delivered to overseas destinations. He would remove the container from the truck trailer with his straddle stacker lift so the products could be unloaded. On the day of the incident he was to remove a container from the trailer chassis that was filled with products that in the past had become damaged, necessitating the return of the container to the shipper. The container was mounted on a sliding chassis trailer. The trailer could accommodate various size containers. This container was shorter than the full length of the trailer and was set toward the front of the trailer chassis near the back of the cab. Apparently the decedent decided to check the contents of the container for damage before unloading by doing a visual check from the ground surface. To do this he had to place himself between the trailer chassis wheels to reach the container doors, because of the forward position of the container on the trailer chassis. The doors were open when the decedent was found. The truck driver had gone into the office to file his papers. When he returned to his truck, he pulled forward not realizing the decedent was in this area of the truck trailer chassis. The decedent was run over by the trailer chassis wheels and died as a result of internal injuries due to crushing.

MIOSHA issued the following Serious citation to the employer:

Serious:

ACT 154 PA OF 1974, SEC. 11(a)

Furnish to each employee employment and a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to the employee in that the employer allowed employees to position themselves between two trailer axles and tires to open the container back doors.

One feasible and acceptable abatement method to correct this hazard would have been to write, implement and train employees on safe procedures for viewing the inside of containers and trailers.