

Case 134. 33-year-old truck driver was killed when he was run over by the dual wheels of a tractor while checking the air brake connections for an air leak between a tractor and trailer.

A 33-year-old male truck driver was killed when he was run over by the dual wheels of a tractor while checking the air brake connections for an air leak between a tractor and trailer. The decedent was training another company driver. The decedent had backed up the tractor and hooked up to a trailer that they were to take to another destination. The trainee was seated in the drivers' position and the decedent was the passenger. The decedent and the trainee noted an air leak at the connection between the tractor and trailer. The decedent took a seal from the tractor to try to fix the leak by changing the seals. The tractor and trailer were setting on a slight incline facing downhill. The trainer set both the tractor and trailer brakes. The decedent indicated that the tractor brakes did not need to be set and then he released the tractor brakes. The trailer brakes remained set. The decedent then exited the tractor and stepped between the rear of the tractor cab and the first set of dual wheels on the driver's side. The trainee exited the cab to watch the decedent replace the seal at the glad hand, and then walked to the back of the trailer. At this point, the trainee noticed the trailer moving forward. He then heard the decedent yell to stop the tractor. The trainee got in the cab and applied the brakes. He then heard the decedent yell to back the tractor up; he was under the wheel. The trainee backed the truck off of the decedent and exited the cab. He called 911 when he found the decedent lying on the ground. Emergency response arrived and the decedent was taken to a local hospital where he was declared dead. Responding police found the emergency line connection at the glad hand to the trailer was faulty and leaking. The company for whom the decedent worked did not have a formal procedure for setting both the tractor and trailer brakes when exiting the cab.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division did not issue any citations to the company. MIOSHA recommended that the firm develop and implement a procedure regarding the utilization of tractor and trailer parking brakes while parked and when leaving the cab of the tractor.