

Case 206. 33-year-old truck driver was killed when an 18-foot long 12-inch diameter water main pipes weighing 700 pounds fell from the forks of a front-end loader as the pipe was being unloaded from a trailer and struck him.

A 33-year-old male truck driver was killed when an 18-foot long 12-inch diameter water main pipes weighing 700 pounds fell from the forks of a front-end loader as the pipe was being unloaded from a trailer and struck him. There were two pipe stacks on the trailer. The pipes were stacked five high with five straps over each five-stack load, and cribbed with 2"x 2" wood and chocks to minimize pipe rolling. Each row of the stack contained six pipes. The decedent and his coworker removed the binding straps from the five-high stack of pipes at the end of the trailer. The front-end loader driver had successfully unloaded four pipes from the top of the five-high stack. The front-end loader forks were an appropriate length to lift the pipes from the trailer and transport them to the installation site. The decedent and a coworker were in the process of removing the binding straps from the second stack of pipes closest to the cab. They had unsecured passenger side binding strap from the stack of pipes closest to the rear of the trailer and then had walked back to the driver's side of the truck to unsecure the driver's side strap. Because of snow depth in front of the truck and an ice and snow-covered catwalk between the cab and trailer, the decedent took the winch bar and walked around the back of the trailer to unsecure a second binding strap. As the decedent walked on the passenger side, the front-end loader driver attempted to unload the last two pipes off of the top of the rear stack he had been previously unloading. As he removed the piping, the pipe at the edge of the fork and a piece of cribbing came off the fork, bounced on piping below it, and struck the decedent in his chest and head. His coworker ran around the trailer and yelled for someone to call 911. Company safety policy required drivers to maintain a safe distance from the truck/trailer during all parts of the loading/unloading process and not to be in close proximity to the loading/unloading equipment.

At the conclusion of its investigation, MIOSHA Construction Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citations:

SERIOUS:

MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT, ACT 154, P.A. 1974, AS AMENDED, SECTION 11(a):

Employer did not furnish to each employee, employment and a place of employment which was free from recognized hazards that were causing or were likely to cause death or serious physical harm to the employee:

Employee was located at the rear of a semi-trailer during unloading operations. An operator was removing the last two pipes from the top stack when one pipe fell off the racks of the loader onto the stack of pipes and then rolled off and struck the employee. Among others, one feasible and acceptable method to correct this violation is to prohibit employees from accessing all areas of the trailer during unloading operations when equipment is present.

SIGNALS, SIGNS, TAGS, AND BARRICADES, PART 22, RULE 2223(1):
Employees not using traffic control devices while working in Road. Employees were blocking one lane of the road during unloading activities of water main pipe from a semi-trailer. Employees exposed to vehicular traffic.