

Case 314. 58-year-old truck driver for a road commission died due to positional asphyxia when his Peterbilt tandem dump truck spreading recycled asphalt at a “T” intersection tipped over onto its right side.

A 58-year-old male truck driver for a road commission died due to positional asphyxia when his Peterbilt tandem dump truck spreading recycled asphalt at a “T” intersection tipped over onto its right side. The bed was raised approximately 1.5 to 2 feet and contained approximately 7000 to 10000 pounds of recycled asphalt. The work crew’s foreman went out to the job site to provide an overview of the job tasks for the day. The decedent and a coworker were tasked with preparing the intersection of two dirt roads (Road 1 and Road 2) by leveling the intersection and spreading millings (recycled asphalt product) in preparation for a gravel haul. The decedent and his coworker did not get out of their trucks and walk the intersection to inspect for potentially troublesome areas. His coworker was at the yard obtaining another load of millings when the incident occurred. The decedent was navigating the turn to head eastbound on Road 1 while spreading millings on the shoulder when his dump truck tipped over onto the passenger side. The responding police department determined that the decedent was not operating the vehicle at an excessive speed and that there was no mechanical failure of any truck component. The decedent was not wearing a seatbelt. The investigating sheriff officer mentioned to MIOSHA that if the decedent had been wearing his seat belt the fatality would not have occurred.

The Road Commission Safety Policy for operation of motor vehicles and other motorized equipment states that safety restrains (seat belts and shoulder harnesses) shall be properly used at all times when available in county road commission vehicles.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Safety and Health Recommendations:

- An inspection/investigation of your worksite revealed the following condition(s) that may constitute a safety or health hazard to your employee(s):
 - Discuss with employees who operate road commission vehicles the importance of wearing seatbelts at all times when operating vehicles. Discuss the issue during safety meetings.