

Case 344. 23-year-old truck driver died when he was pinned between two trailers at a transportation hub.

A 23-year-old male truck driver died when he was pinned between two trailers at a transportation hub. Loaded semi-trailers were staged by a switcher truck for pickup and were parked approximately 6 to 12 inches apart. The decedent was in the process of picking up a loaded semi-trailer when the unwitnessed incident occurred. At approximately 1:30 a.m. the decedent was observed by the switcher driver in the yard backing under his trailer. A few hours later, the tractor was observed to be connected to the trailer and running and it was believed the decedent was sleeping. Between 4:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m., another switcher driver was staging another trailer and observed the deceased pinned and unresponsive between the two trailers. He contacted his supervisor. The supervisor responded to the area and observed the decedent stuck between the trailers. The supervisor attempted to reach him, but could not. Emergency response was called, and using air bags, were able to remove him from between the trailers. The investigation proved inconclusive as to the cause of this incident. The trailer was found to be properly connected. It appeared the decedent was raising the landing gear on the trailer. It is hypothesized that the trailer kingpin was not properly seated in the fifth wheel and when the landing gear was raised, the trailer shifted enough to pin him.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued one alleged Other-than-Serious citation and one Safety Recommendation to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation:

OTHER-THAN-SERIOUS: RECORDING AND REPORTING OF OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES, PART 11, RULE 1139(1):

An oral report of a work-related incident resulting in a fatality or the inpatient hospitalization of three or more employees was not made within eight hours after the occurrence to the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration, State Secondary Complex, 7150 Harris Drive, P.O. Box 30644, Lansing, Michigan 48909, phone 1-800-858-0397.

(Employer did not report a work-related incident resulting in a fatality to employee within 8 hours after the occurrence).

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION: Remind drivers to ensure proper fifth wheel engagement before raising the landing gear.