

Case 377. 41-year-old loader crew leader died when she was struck and run over by a backing semi-tractor/trailer.

A 41-year-old female loader crew leader died when she was struck and run over by a backing semi-tractor and trailer with a wagon-type tarp pulled back into position (Semi #1). The trailer was loaded with steel coils. A second semi-tractor/trailer (Semi #2) was waiting outside the building to be directed by the decedent into the loading area. The independent owner/operator driving Semi #1 was blocked from driving forward to the exit by a crane operator moving a roll of steel. The decedent was wearing a high visibility vest and was standing behind and almost to the center of Semi #1's trailer using hand signals to direct both semi drivers. Without waiting for backing instruction from the decedent and apparently not knowing she was behind the trailer, Semi #1's driver began to back the semi. Semi #2's driver saw the decedent in the path of travel and began honking his horn to warn both the decedent and Semi #1's driver. The decedent was unable to get out of the way in time, and was struck and dragged approximately 10 feet by the semi-trailer. Both drivers exited their vehicles; Driver #2 told Driver #1 to not move the truck. Driver #2 ran back to his truck to get his cell phone. Driver #1 re-entered his truck and began to again back the vehicle. Driver #2 again honked his horn to stop Driver #1. Driver #1 exited his truck and ran to the shipping office. Emergency response was summoned and the decedent was declared dead. Subsequent investigation by police found that Driver #1's passenger side mirror was not adjusted properly; it was turned in to the point that while sitting in the driver's seat, the driver would not have been able to see the decedent behind the trailer.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citations to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation:

SERIOUS: MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT, ACT 154, RULE 408.1011(a):

An employer shall furnish to each employee, employment and a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards that are causing, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to the employee.

The employee was not furnished a place of employment free from recognized hazards, as there were no measures taken to reduce the aggressive and unsafe operation of tractor trailer truck motor vehicles through the facility while the employee was directing motor vehicle traffic in building D shipping area.

- a. The company policy on vehicles backing up, which requires drivers or haulers to be guided when backing up, was not being enforced or followed.
- b. The company policy requiring drivers to answer 3 questions before being permitted to enter facility was not being followed, in that other drivers will assist those having difficulty in providing the correct responses.)

SERIOUS: GENERAL PROVISIONS, GI PART 1, RULE 408310011(a):

An employer shall comply with all of the following:

- (a) Provide training to each newly assigned employee regarding the operating procedures, hazards, and safeguards of the job.
- (b) Not knowingly authorize a process, machine, or equipment to be used which does not meet applicable state safety standards.
- (c) Establish, maintain and assure the utilization of a lockout procedure as prescribed in rule 32.
- (d) Provide a chain, bracket, or other device and assure its use at all times to restrain compressed gas cylinders from falling.

The employee did not receive adequate training in the hazards and safeguards of the job while the employee was directing motor vehicle traffic in building D shipping area. Employee was standing in the blind spot of the truck driver's mirrors and directly behind the trailer while the employee was backing up. Employees never received training on where to stand when directing truck drivers in backing out of the building.