

Load Related Fall Injuries to Drivers

What happened

Working with a load to get it on or off a trailer can be dangerous. Falling off the trailer is no small matter. Following are summaries of fall injuries sustained while maneuvering loads on or off a trailer. These examples are just a few of the many fall injuries experienced every year by Washington state truck drivers.

- A 51-year-old truck driver was unloading a piece of construction equipment from a low boy trailer. He slipped and fell from the equipment, hit the trailer, and landed 4 feet below. He sustained injuries to his hip and lower back. His injuries required surgery and resulted in permanent partial disability. Workers' compensation costs were \$119,000, including 500 days of time-loss.
- A 31-year-old dock worker was unloading a delivery truck when he stepped into a gap between the loading dock and truck and fell. He hit his right knee on the steel corner of the dock. The injury to his knee required multiple surgeries. Workers' compensation costs were \$112,000, including 1,020 days of time-loss.
- A 25-year-old package delivery driver slipped on his truck's wet lift gate and fell 4 feet to the ground, hitting his right elbow on the lift gate. He fractured his elbow, resulting in permanent partial disability. Workers' compensation costs were \$20,000, including 140 days time-loss.

Of the injuries summarized, the shortest amount of time lost from work was close to five months. Companies and drivers can't afford these types of injuries.

How can you prevent similar incidents?

- Assure dock plates are in place and are full width.
- Provide adequate lighting.
- Remove slip and trip hazards, such as banding debris.
- Check loads for broken pallets or loose banding.
- Get help for loads not manageable by one person.
- Provide and use loading and unloading equipment that is appropriate for the load materials.
- Check trailer access steps, ladders, and handholds. Retro fit if inadequate or report if damaged.
- Maintain non-skid surfaces at trailer threshold and on dock plates.
- Drivers should wear footwear suitable for the job.
- Encourage drivers to report customer delivery site fall hazard conditions they are exposed to.



A series of work-related safety and health injury prevention tips for the trucking industry



This driver is at risk of falling from the back of the trailer, an all too common situation.

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