

Truck Driver Safety for Contractors

Best Practice Series

BP-16



Most of the contractor employees who have died in powered haulage accidents were truck drivers. The accidents were mainly caused by trucks going out of control or by drivers getting run over by other equipment.

To help prevent accidents contract truck drivers should:

- **SLOW DOWN.** Mine roads may be a lot steeper than public highways, and the road conditions may not be as good. It's critical for you to watch your speed and use the correct gear, so that you can maintain control on downgrades and around curves.
- **NOT** drive equipment until you know all about how and when to use the truck's retarder.
- **KNOW AND FOLLOW** the mine's traffic rules. Lots of times, unusual traffic patterns and right-of-way rules are found on mine property. At some mines, you've got to drive on the left side of the road.
- **WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT.** Many drivers have been killed or injured attempting to jump from the vehicle's cab. Bouncing against the inside of the cab has resulted in death. Remember *seat belts save lives!*
- **BE ALERT TO EQUIPMENT BLIND SPOTS.** Most mining equipment have blind spots. If you can't see the driver, then the driver probably can't see you.

- **STAY IN THE VEHICLE'S CAB.** That's the safest place for you, and where other equipment operators expect you to be.
- **DRIVE DEFENSIVELY** and watch out for other moving equipment. Use caution when approaching railroad crossings. Trains can run at any time.
- **BEWARE OF STOCKPILES.** A harmless looking stockpile can collapse unexpectedly and bury you alive. Never get between your vehicle and a stockpile. Stay in the cab while your truck's being loaded.
- **WATCH FOR OVERHEAD POWER LINES AND OBSTRUCTIONS.** Make sure these hazards don't exist before raising the truck bed or using a tarping mechanism.
- **PARK PROPERLY.** If you have to park your vehicle on a grade, make sure to chock the wheels or turn the wheels into a bank, and *always* set the parking brake.
- **NOT RISK A FALL.** If you need to climb on your truck, *always* maintain three points of contact. Use fall protection equipment and platforms whenever possible.
- **CHECK YOUR TRUCK FOR SAFETY DEFECTS** and have them corrected before operating it.

To help prevent accidents mine operators and supervisors should:

- **TRAIN CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES** on the hazards of mine properties.
- **ESTABLISH AND ENFORCE** traffic rules which include safe parking and staging areas for trucks. Minimize the need for trucks to back up.

- **PROVIDE CLEARLY MARKED, LEGIBLE AND WELL-MAINTAINED SIGNS** to explain traffic patterns, speed limits, right of way, and left hand operation areas on all mine roads.
- **POST** ample signs throughout the mine property to guide contract truck drivers to their destinations, and keep them from having to get out of their trucks to ask questions.
- **TRAIN** truck drivers of the danger of getting between their rigs and a stockpile. Several fatalities have occurred when stockpiles collapsed on drivers.
- **TRAIN** truck drivers to stay in the cab of their vehicle while on mine property, unless they're in a designated safe area.
- **REQUIRE** truck drivers to be accountable for complying with the training provided and the safety rules at the mines. This is for everybody's protection.
- **PROVIDE** platforms for contract drivers that afford fall protection when climbing on their trucks.
- **CONSTRUCT AND MAINTAIN** adequate berms on elevated roads and at dump points.
- **LOCATE OVERHEAD POWER LINES** away from areas where equipment operates whenever possible. Where equipment must be operated near high voltage power lines, clearances for equipment in raised positions must be at least 10 feet unless the line is deenergized.

Visit the MSHA home page at www.msha.gov