

# **FATAL ALERT**

On February 15, 2014, a 26 year old male employee working as a “Swamper” (driver apprentice) for an oil field trucking company, was fatally injured when he was backed over by a co-worker operating a gas engine, 1-ton dually, welding truck. The welding truck was in the process of relocating past winch truck operations on the well site at the time of the incident.

The company was in preparation for a “rig up stage” at a new well drill site. Just prior to the incident, the welding truck driver and the winch truck employees of the same company met and discussed the planned work. All three employees were aware the welding truck would be required to back up from where it was located, and drive past the swamper and winch truck driver’s location.

The Swamper was assisting the winch truck driver in the relocation of mud and water tanks. After the previous meeting, the winch truck driver returned to his truck, and the Swamper assisted in horizontal rigging of the tank to winch equipment. The welder returned to his truck to move it.

At the time of the accident the welding truck driver was operating a truck without benefit of back-up alarm or spotter. As the welding truck driver backed his vehicle up to the new location, the swamper positioned himself along the storage tank being winched. The swamper stepped backward into the path of the welding truck, the welding truck passed completely over the victim.

The decedent died of his injuries at the scene.

## **Significant Factors:**

- The welding truck driver arrived on site after the morning job safety analysis (JSA) and tailgate safety meeting.
- All three workers failed to identify the hazards present on location.
- There were four different diesel engines running in the area of the incident, creating significant background noise. The diesel engine noise and winds diminished the victim’s ability to hear the much quieter gasoline engine of the welding truck.
- The victim was wearing a hooded sweatshirt under FRC coveralls, which created limited peripheral vision.
- The victim inadvertently positioned himself in the path of the welding truck to avoid hazards associated with the winching operation he was assisting with.
- The victim had his back to the driver; the driver had his back to the victim.
- The driver of the welding truck could not see directly to the rear due to truck design, obstructed view created by the welding equipment and the driver did not ask for a spotter to assist.
- The gas engine welding truck was never equipped with a back-up alarm.
- The victim did not offer to be a spotter, and the winch truck driver did not offer to be a spotter.
- The trucking company did have a vehicle inspection form, but it was used inconsistently.
- The inspection form did not have a vehicle specific format, or a back-up alarm check.
- The winch truck driver was likely in transition of view; he was shifting from left side mirror to right side mirror and rear window view of winch process.

## **Recommendations:**

- Brief all employees on the facts and circumstances of this fatal incident.
- In accordance with OSHA Construction Standards, properly equip motor vehicles used in construction environments with audible devices that may be heard over other sounds when being backed-up.
- Revisit safety programs and JSA information to ensure they are applicable to OSHA standards necessary for the work to be performed.
- Use a spotter when backing equipment near other personnel as required.
- Utilize high visibility outer garments.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid wearing clothing or hooded garments which limit your field of view.
- Use of approved FRC helmet liners is preferred, as they turn with your head.
- Ensure that pre-tour safety meetings are conducted to discuss the work to be performed, identifying the potential safety hazards and implementing safe work procedures to control hazards.
- Ensure the safety meeting information is provided to all employees.