

Fatal Alert

On February 26, 2014, an employee was loading molten sulfur into a Semi-Tractor's trailer. After loading was complete the employee was closing the lid of the trailer and lost his balance, causing him to fall backwards from a crouched position between the Carbis type guardrail system of the loading facility and the walking/working surface of the trailer. There was approximately a 24 inch gap between the lowest guardrail and the working platform the employee was walking and working on. There was no other form of fall protection being used other than the inadequate guardrail system. The employee fell approximately 11 feet, landing on his head and neck. The employee died later that day due to head trauma and swelling of the brain.

Significant Factors

- The platform that the employee was working and walking on was not adequately designed to provide appropriated fall protection.
- The top rail of guardrail system was at the proper height but, the lower/mid rail was not positioned at a normal height of 21 inches from the walking/working surface of the trailer.
- No other form of fall protection was being used at the time of the incident.

Recommendations

- Perform a hazard assessment and a thorough inspection of all work locations where employees are expected to load material/work.
- Ensure there is compliant fall protection systems in place at all work locations (guardrail system or personal fall arrest system) when employee are working/walking on elevated working surfaces that are 4 or more feet above a lower as it relates to general industry
- Enforce the availability and use of adequate fall protection.