

FATAL ALERT

May 31, 2006

A Truck Driver/Operator was fatally injured heating water in a frac tank to be used in fracing a gas well to increase production. The employee was heating the third of four tanks when he became wedged between the third and fourth tanks. The employee died from thermal injuries due to being trapped against a heated metal surface. There were no eye witnesses to the accident and the physical evidence at the scene didn't offer any clues as to how or why the deceased became wedged between the water tanks. After the deceased became incapacitated and was unable to monitor the water heating truck, it caught fire and burned. The truck was a total loss.

Significant Factors:

- Employee was on top of the water tank, which is an area that he was not expected or directed to be in to perform the job task.
- Fire and subsequent burning of the frac water heating truck was secondary to the fatality.
- Employee was working alone at a remote location at night.
- No communication system arranged between employee and employer to enhance the safety of an employee working alone at night in a remote location.

Recommendations:

- All employees should be briefed on the facts and circumstances of this accident.
- Employees should not work in potentially hazardous locations at the job site without authorization/knowledge by management. Employees should not work in locations not required to perform the job task.
- A heat/temperature controller, which automatically initiates shutdown of equipment in case of overheating, should be installed on frac oil and water heating trucks.
- Employees working at night in remote locations should either work in pairs or establish a communication system to enhance employee safety.