

Fatal Alert

On August 17, 2011, two trucking companies working for an oilfield servicing company moving equipment from one truck' trailer to another. The item was too large to be off-loaded using a forklift, and a crane was not available. As they were aligning one of the trucks (winch truck) behind the other truck (flatbed trailer) to unload the large item, one of the truck drivers was pinched between the two trucks.

According to the employees of the oilfield servicing company, the Winch Truck Operator was backing up his truck towards the rear of the flatbed trailer, while being guided by employees of the oilfield servicing company. One employee was standing on the bed of the flatbed trailer, and the other employee was standing on the ground next to the winch truck. One of the oilfield servicing company employees had given the winch truck driver the sign to stop his truck, and he did stop. The two trucks were about 3 feet apart at the time they were both stopped. After the winch truck was stopped, the driver of the flatbed truck stepped in between the two trucks to retrieve his chain which he did not want used during the winching operation. As he was retrieving his chain, the driver of the winch truck, began to shut off his truck and let off the clutch. The winch truck was not out of gear and the engine was not completely shut off. The winch truck jumped backward, catching and crushing the flatbed truck driver between the vehicles.

One of the oilfield servicing company employees saw the driver of the flatbed trailer truck step between the two trucks and warned him to step back, but his warning was too late.

The Flatbed Trailer Driver was taken to the hospital and later died of injuries sustained.

Findings:

- The winch truck driver did not make sure his truck was out of gear before letting off the clutch.
- The Coroner's report indicated that the driver died of injuries sustained from crushing, and that the driver's blood content tested positive for amphetamines.
- Both drivers were viewed as having many years of experience at driving trucks.
- With the knowledge and experience of both drivers, this accident could have been avoided if both drivers would have adhered to training and if Baker Hughes Oilfield Operations Inc., employees would not have allowed the driver to be near the danger zone associated with the moving vehicles.

Recommendations:

- Brief all employees on the facts and circumstances of this fatal mishap.
- Brief/retrain all employees on the dangers of working in equipment.
- Train/retrain all employees to recognize related hazards in their work places.
- Do not allow delivery/pick-up drivers to be near the danger zone associated with the moving vehicles.