

HAZARD ALERT

Pedestrian Tow Drivers Struck and Killed

What is the hazard?

Tow truck operators routinely work on foot at roadside, placing them at risk of being struck by passing motor vehicles. Many drivers are killed while securing their load, adjusting winches, or entering the cab on the traffic-facing side of the truck. **Three tow truck drivers were killed from 2015—2016 in Kentucky.**

The following tow driver deaths occurred in Kentucky:

Case 1: A 42-year-old male tow truck driver loaded a disabled pickup truck onto his rollback tow truck on the southbound shoulder of a four-lane, undivided highway. As he was entering the tow truck cab on the traffic-facing side of the truck, an oncoming van swerved into the emergency lane and struck him, causing fatal injuries. (2016)

Case 2: A 48-year-old male tow truck owner-operator was loading a disabled vehicle onto his flatbed tow truck on the west bound shoulder of a four-lane controlled access divided highway. At approximately 10:15 p.m., the victim was on the traffic-facing lane side securing the vehicle to his tow truck when the operator of an oncoming sport utility vehicle traveling in the same direction failed to move over, veered over the edge line, and struck the tow truck owner and the side of the tow truck. He later died at the hospital. (2016)

Case 3: A 35-year-old tow truck driver was loading a stalled sedan onto on a wheel lift tow truck in the eastbound shoulder of a two-lane undivided state highway. The victim was operating the lift controls on the traffic facing side of the tow truck when an approaching sedan veered into the emergency lane and struck the open driver's side door of the stalled sedan, before striking the tow truck driver and the side mirror on the tow truck. The operator of the sedan continued down the road and was later found to be intoxicated. The victim died at the scene. (2015)



Recommendations:

- Limit the amount of time spent on the traffic-facing side of the truck.
- When possible, enter the cab from the non-traffic-facing side of the truck.
- Request the presence of law enforcement to aid in traffic control when vehicles are to be towed at roadside.
- There should be increased public awareness of the “Move Over Law” in Kentucky.
- Place portable cones, bidirectional triangles, flares, and other warning devices to warn approaching motorists. Place and collect emergency devices while facing traffic.
- Wear high-visibility safety apparel, such as safety vests, when working at roadside.

Further Resources

Name of Resource	Resource Description	Resource Link
Case Report: Tow Truck Driver Struck and Killed by Van While Entering His Tow Truck <i>KY FACE Program</i>	Full occupational fatality investigation report for Case 1.	http://www.mc.uky.edu/kiprc/face/reports/pdf/16KY055.pdf
Case Report: Tow Truck Driver Struck and Killed by Passenger Vehicle While Securing Disabled Vehicle onto Flatbed Tow Truck <i>KY FACE Program</i>	Full occupational fatality investigation report for Case 2.	http://www.mc.uky.edu/kiprc/face/reports/pdf/16KY052.pdf
Case Report: Pedestrian Tow Truck Operator Struck and Killed by Drunk Driver While Rendering Assistance on Highway Roadside	Full occupational fatality investigation report for Case 3.	http://www.mc.uky.edu/kiprc/face/reports/pdf/14KY033.pdf
Digital Face Story: Towing Company Owner Dies When Struck by Box Truck Driver <i>KY FACE Program</i>	A video detailing the death of a tow truck driver who was struck and killed by an intoxicated driver while loading a vehicle at	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yliO77OIOPs

For additional training materials and information regarding Kentucky FACE, please visit the program website at:
<http://www.mc.uky.edu/kiprc/face>

Contact FACE:

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