Case Summary

Heavy Equipment Mechanic Died when an Elevated Dump Truck Tag Axle Pins Him to the Concrete Floor

On September 19, 2013, at approximately 4:28 p.m. a 58-year-old heavy equipment mechanic was replacing an air bag on a tri-axle dump truck. The victim was under the truck and axle, which was resting on a hydraulic floor jack. While the victim was under the axle, he inadvertently placed his hand on the jack causing the floor jack to lower and pin him between the axle and the concrete floor. At 4:48 p.m. the shop security camera shows the victim’s fellow mechanic return to the shop after he finished repairing a truck he was working on. He returned to the shop where the victim was working, to get ready to leave for the day. He yelled for the victim but received no answer. The mechanic observed the victim’s legs and called out his name again, with no response. The mechanic walked around the truck to the passenger side and observed the victim’s left hand on the handle of the jack. The mechanic removed the victim’s hand from the jack and shook him without getting a response. He yelled for other employees to dial 911 for assistance.

EMS and the Sheriff arrived six minutes after the call was placed, and the victim was transported via ambulance to the hospital. The victim succumbed to his injuries due to compression asphyxia on September 21, 2013 at 1:50 am.

What steps can be made to prevent such incidents?

Recommendation No. 1: Employers shall ensure that employees using jacks must crib, block, or otherwise secure the loads immediately after they have been raised.

Recommendation No. 2: Employers should conduct heavy equipment mechanic safety training on the correct procedures for air bag installation.

Recommendation No. 3: Employers shall conduct annual worker safety training for all employees exposed to hazards in the workplace.

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