Fall Safety Alert and Reminders

Q: What's the best way to right a semi-tanker after an overturn?

A: Not to overturn it in the first place.

The window of opportunity for manure application prior to winter’s arrival is diminishing. Business pressures build to get the job done and take a toll on everyone involved in the operation. Right now when daylight hours are limited, weeks of long work hours have you feeling fatigued and stressed, equipment has been run hard; now isn’t the time to shortcut safety. For commercial manure applicators, a crash or spill incident means additional complications and cost of spill response, DOT fines or legal charges, and absolutely the worst scenario, injury to an employee or the motor vehicle operator. At the very least, it means your crews aren’t running and a truck or tanker is out of service for days or weeks.

__it doesn’t just happen

A part of any good safety program is looking at incidents to see what went wrong. In a 30 hour time frame between November 4 and 5, there were 3 overturn incidents involving semis and trucks hauling manure. So far this fall, we are aware of at least 4 other similar incidents. These incidents just don’t happen from bad luck or being in the wrong place. **All 7 could have easily been prevented.** Reviewing the environmental, human and factors after an accident or near miss is a valuable way to look into causes and assess changes to prevent future incidents.

Common factors from fall truck/tanker turnovers include, but are not limited to:

- Shoulders: Pulling too far off or soft gravel
- Not knowing where driveway culverts end
- Driving too fast to safely make a turn

Keep these safety practices in mind for your business and as a driver:
Take care of yourself...

Driver fatigue and lack of attention can significantly increase your risk of a crash. Hours of service violations are serious and can threaten your livelihood or even your life. Stay healthy and well rested, or don't drive.

Quick Driver Fatigue Safety Quiz.

1. Coffee overcomes the effects of drowsiness while driving. (T or F)
2. I can tell when I'm going to go to sleep. (T or F)
3. I'm a safe driver so it doesn't matter if I'm sleepy. (T or F)
4. Being sleepy makes you misperceive things. (T or F)
5. Wandering, disconnected thoughts are a warning sign of driver fatigue. (T or F)
6. A microsleep lasts four or five seconds. (T or F)

Driver Fatigue Quiz -- Answers

1. FALSE. Stimulants are no substitute for sleep. Drinks containing caffeine, such as coffee or cola, can help you feel more alert but the effects last only for a short time.
2. FALSE. Sleep is not voluntary. If you're drowsy, you can fall asleep and never even know it. You cannot tell how long you've been asleep.
3. FALSE. The only safe driver is an alert driver. Even the safest drivers become confused and use poor judgment when they are sleepy.
4. TRUE. One of the warning signs of a drowsy driver is misjudging surroundings.
5. TRUE. If you are driving and your thoughts begin to wander, it is time to pull over and take a break.
6. TRUE. During a "microsleep" of four or five seconds, a car can travel 100 yards, plenty of time to cause a serious crash.

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Communicating with members of the crew is important, but distracted driving has been well documented as a cause of crashes. Crew members should avoid talking on the radio/cell phone when on the road, choosing instead to make those calls when in the field, loading or stopped.
**ALWAYS MAINTAIN YOUR VEHICLE**

It can save your life. Inspect your vehicle before each trip, and check your brakes regularly.

Brake defects are the most frequently cited out-of-service inspection violation. Learn how to inspect your brakes, identify safety defects, and get them repaired before risking your life, and others, on the highway.

*What’s your company’s procedure on reporting maintenance needs? Early maintenance can actually save time and money. The easiest thing to say may be “let’s get through the day?” or “this isn’t my concern.” However, it takes less time to do an inspection and repair than time invested in a manure spill incident, possible injury incident, dealing with government agencies, media, insur-

**BE AWARE OF YOUR BLIND SPOTS (the "NO-ZONE")**

Other drivers may not be aware of the size of your blind spots.

One-third of all crashes between large trucks and cars take place in the No-Zone areas around a truck. Adjust your mirrors and be vigilant in watching out for other vehicles in the No-Zone.

*Photo Credit:  http://www.ct.gov/dmv/

**PLEASE FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT**

Buckle up for safety and vehicle control. Besides it is the law to buckle up.

If you are in a crash, a seat belt will keep you in your seat and allow for you to maintain control of your truck. Increasing seat belt use is still the single most effective thing we can do to save lives and reduce injuries on our roadways.

*Requiring seatbelt use should be a company policy. Not requiring the use of a seat belt as an employer could bring additional penalties to the business in the event of an incident with injury to the employee*
Avoid aggressive drivers and maintain a safe speed.

Two-thirds of all traffic fatalities may be caused by aggressive driving behaviors. Keep your distance and maintain a safe speed. The only thing excessive speed increases is your chance for a crash.

_Rural roads have some risks that are different than interstate driving. Be aware of changing speed limits, right-of-way issues, road design factors; that all present extra hazards when operating on rural road_

**References**


**Associate Members**

PNAAW would like to thank our Associate Members for their support of the organization. Associate Members for 2010 include:

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