



Learning from incidents

AWARENESS ALERT

Driver Fatality/Rollover/Spill

DST-AW-201101
February 2011

STUSCO Road Transport

Target audience for this alert

- Managers, Supervisors and Contract Holders for heavy vehicle road transport operations
- Professional Drivers of heavy vehicles

What happened

On November 7, 2010 at approximately 1626 hrs, a contract road tanker transporting crude oil was travelling on a rural highway in Oklahoma when it departed the asphalt surface onto the soft earth shoulder to the right. The driver attempted to steer the truck to the left, back onto the road. During this steer movement, the unit jack-knifed; the tanker swung round across the side road, hit the soft terrain and rolled over with its right side leading. The driver died at the scene and 120 bbls of product was spilled.

Why it happened

While it is not known exactly what caused the unit to depart the road to the right, the immediate cause of the incident was driver error. The driver attempted to steer the unit back onto the road and it is believed he oversteered resulting in the tractor-tanker jack-knife. The investigation also revealed the following contributory factors:

- The unit was travelling at approximately 70 mph when it departed the road where the speed limit was 65 mph (excessive speed).
- According to the police report, the driver was not wearing his seat belt at the time of the incident.
- The autopsy revealed that the driver was positive for alcohol use.

Photograph 13
Left side of the Peterbilt.



Photograph 9
Scored terrain where the tractor-trailer began to roll over.



Lessons learned



Goal Zero: Zero injuries, Zero fatalities

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- The investigation did not identify any external sources of distraction (use of mobile phone), however a temporary lack of attention by the driver or other external distraction could not be excluded.
- The RT contractor was in the process of implementing IVMS throughout their fleet but their program had not been fully developed.
- The RT contractor was compliant with U.S. D.O.T. regulations in regard to random drug and alcohol testing. However, this driver had not been chosen for random testing during his 4 years of employment. After the incident, the RT contractor began annual drug/alcohol testing in addition to their current random program.
- The driver was involved in a less serious incident a few months earlier that required for cause testing but the testing was not completed according to the RT contractor's procedures. Investigation revealed that the RT contractor's for cause testing process was adequate, but there was a gap in the execution of the process.

Recommendations

- Road Transport contractors should review this incident with all drivers and include learnings in their defensive driver and rollover prevention training. Pay particular attention to the actions a driver should take when they put a wheel off the road and onto a soft shoulder. Focus should be on keeping the unit upright and getting it stopped, rather than attempting to steer the unit back onto the road.
- Road Transport contractors should review their drug and alcohol testing program to ensure that drivers are tested at least annually (where permitted by law).
- Road Transport contractors should review their "for cause" drug and alcohol testing process to ensure adequate resources are available, especially after hours and on weekends.
- It's plain and simple, seatbelts save lives and carriers need effective tools in place like sensors hooked into the IVMS and "on the road" spot check programs to ensure that they are being used at all times when the vehicle is in motion.

Further information

Please contact [Dan Coakley](#) or [Jim Price](#).



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