Driving Vehicles and Moving Equipment Safely Fatality File

Truck Driver Run Over by Trash Compactor at Municipal Landfill

A 35-year-old male truck driver (the victim) sustained fatal injuries as a result of being run over by a mobile landfill compactor at a local municipal landfill. The victim, a truck driver for a municipal solid waste (MSW) trucking company, was delivering a load of refuse to the landfill at approximately 2:00 p.m. He pulled his semi-truck up to a working face, where landfill employees were operating two landfill compactors and a bulldozer, and started unloading. At approximately 2:20 p.m., one of the landfill compactors backed up along the driver's side of the victim's truck to get sand from a sand pile. The back up alarm on the compactor was working properly and the operator stated that he looked through both the rear and side mirrors before he began backing up but did not see the victim in his path. When the compactor curved away from the victim's truck, the other compactor operator saw the victim lying on the ground next to his semitruck waving his hands for help. It appeared that the victim had been struck by the compactor as he was putting a broom into his truck following unloading. The victim suffered massive crushing wounds to his left torso (pelvic area) and left leg. Paramedics were summoned immediately and responded within minutes. The victim was treated at the scene before being transported by helicopter to a hospital trauma center where he died six days later.

New York State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) investigators concluded that to help prevent similar incidents from occurring, employers should:

- Develop a traffic control plan that can be used to coordinate the movements of personnel on foot, landfill mobile equipment and delivery trucks;

- Enforce a policy that requires delivery drivers to remain in the truck cab during unloading;
- Consider using additional safety devices on landfill equipment to warn drivers when someone is in their blind spot;
- Develop and enforce a policy that requires all landfill employees, delivery drivers and visitors to wear high visibility safety vests while they are on landfill property; Additionally, MSW trucking companies should:
- Design, develop, and implement a comprehensive health and safety program and train all employees in the program.