Falling Trailer Crushes Worker

A poorly-supported trailer tipped over and crushed a worker who was operating a sandblaster underneath it.

The sandblasting was being done in preparation for painting the metal storage trailer. The trailer was supported by a temporary axle wheel assembly at the rear and one support leg at the front corner. A gasoline-powered air compressor was being used to blast grains of silica onto the metal underside of the trailer to remove old paint and rust.

The worker’s supervisor, driving past the trailer as he left the worksite for lunch, saw the trailer was upright. He heard noise and saw dust coming from the sandblasting operation. When he returned an hour later, he noticed the trailer had tipped forward on one side. The worker was pinned beneath the front corner of the trailer. Emergency medical workers found the victim dead of asphyxiation.

Direct cause of the incident was improper securing of the storage trailer before the work began. Two support legs should have been used at the front and the wheels should have been blocked.

Do you ever work around poorly-secured equipment or structures? Make sure the setup is safe before you begin. Proper supervision could also have prevented this fatality. Does your supervisor make sure you are doing the job safely?