Inexperienced Truck Driver Crushed By Vehicle

A relatively new truck driver was engaged in transporting rock from the underground blasting area in a mine to the surface. He was still in what has been referred to as a "training position."

He stopped to talk to several other workers, one of whom was driving another piece of heavy equipment – a scoop loader. The truck driver parked his vehicle approximately 10 feet behind the loader and set the electric parking brake with the toggle switch.

Because of the limited space in the underground tunnels it is normal practice to enter equipment from the front end rather than the sides. The driver returned to his vehicle and apparently placed his hands on the dash board of the truck as he was climbing in the cab. It appears that he inadvertently activated the toggle switch and released the parking brake. His truck rolled forward, crushing his upper right thigh between the truck and loader. He was immediately air-lifted by helicopter to the closest hospital accompanied by an experienced first aid attendant. However, the bleeding could not be controlled and he died shortly after his arrival in the emergency ward.

The investigation found that it was standard procedure that vehicles be parked at a much greater distance than 10 feet apart. Because the vehicles were so close, the driver did not have enough time to react and escape. The report also recommended that safety and training procedures be tightened up for all employees, but especially new workers.

Perhaps in this case the more experienced workers could have prevented the mishap if they had cautioned the new worker about parking his vehicle so close to the loader. Safety is more than looking out for Number One – it means looking out for your fellow worker as well.