Motor Vehicle Safety (Loose Cargo) Fatality Report

Losing cargo from your trailer, or losing the trailer itself, is not something to take lightly. A Lafayette man lost his life in a November 2016 crash east of Lafayette on I-10. The 25-year-old died and a Florida woman suffered serious injuries while trying to move cargo from the roadway.

This crash emphasizes the importance of properly securing your cargo, and following all rules, regulations, and best practices when towing a trailer. Unsecured and lost cargo can cost lives.

The woman injured in the crash was traveling toward Lafayette on I-10 westbound when the rented trailer she was towing behind her SUV detached. The trailer came to rest in the far right lane of the interstate.

The crash

The woman stopped on the shoulder and got out of her car to attempt to move the trailer from the roadway. The Lafayette man witnessed the incident, and pulled over to help.

As they were working to move the trailer, an 81-year-old truck driver from Mississippi swerved to avoid hitting the trailer but collided with the Volkswagen and the trailer. The truck struck both the man and the woman working to move the trailer. The Lafayette man suffered fatal injuries and died on the scene. The Florida woman suffered critical injuries and was admitted at a local hospital.

Takeaway

The risk factors for this crash began long before the tractor trailer came along. An improperly secured load – in this case the trailer – and people standing on the interstate are both major contributors to this deadly incident. The fact that it occurred a little after 1 a.m. is also a factor, because it can be incredibly

difficult to see road debris or unexpected pedestrians in the dark.