Towing Large Loads Fatality File

A tow truck driver in his 40s died when he was pinned against a tow truck lift fork and run over by a school bus when the bus was struck by an SUV traveling at a high rate of speed.

Due to a flat tire, the bus driver pulled over to the shoulder near the entrance of an exit ramp. The decedent responded to the call and set up his truck approximately 8-10 feet in front of the school bus. The decedent was lying on the ground, looking under the bus trying to decide what equipment he would need to hook the bus to move it. An SUV traveling in the left lane at a high rate of speed made an abrupt turn to the right swerving across two lanes, driving onto the shoulder. As the SUV attempted to renter the freeway it struck the driver's side rear of the school bus, pushing it forward eight to ten feet. The bus pinned the decedent against the boom, the tire ran over and crushed him, and the bus spring shackle bolts struck him in the chest. He was declared dead at the scene.

EMPLOYERS

The towing company owner began the towing business in 1988 with one truck. The business had grown to include three tow businesses and two junkyards. The firm had been at this tow facility location for 20 years. The firm had four heavy duty tow vehicles. Three had been dispatched to other Michigan locations; his firm was under towing contracts with several municipalities, colleges, sheriff departments and the Michigan State Police. This was the first time the tow vehicle the decedent was using had been dispatched. The

firm employed twenty-eight individuals at the location where the decedent worked. The post-collision Michigan DOT inspection of the tow truck did not find any violations.