Trucking Safety Fatality File

Truck Driver Dies after Being Struck by Semi-Trailer Truck in Trailer Lot of Customer Yard

A 39-year-old truck driver working outside his semi-trailer truck died when he was struck and crushed against his trailer by a semi-trailer truck that swung wide as it pulled out of an adjacent parking stall. The victim was employed by a general freight trucking company that transports refrigerated goods. He had 10 years' experience driving semi-trailer trucks.

On the day of the incident, the victim was assigned by his dispatcher to pick up freight consisting of a full trailer load of chilled boxed beef at a customer's meat processing facility. The victim drove his truck to the customer location. He then drove to the empty trailer lot portion of the yard where he unhooked and dropped his refrigeration trailer. An employee of the facility hooked the trailer to a yard hostler and hauled it to the loading dock to be loaded with freight.

After the trailer was loaded, the hostler operator deposited the trailer in the loaded trailer lot. Located across from the loading dock, the lot's surface is a mixture of asphalt and concrete with yellow lines marking the parking stalls. There are often several trailers parked in the lot. It is a part of the yard where loaded trailers are left awaiting their drivers who then back their trucks up to their trailers and hook them up and prepare for departure. Drivers may pick-up their trailers at any time during the da or night.

The victim backed his truck up to his trailer and hooked it up. As he was doing this and preparing to depart, he chatted with the driver of a truck in the adjacent parking stall who was also preparing to depart. The driver of the other truck finished his

pre-trip check and got into the cab of his truck. He reported that he last saw the victim standing at the rear of his own truck’s trailer. Less than a minute after last seeing the victim the other driver checked his mirrors and started moving the truck forward out of the stall.

As he drove forward, he made a sharp turn to the left in order to avoid a hostler parked in front of his truck. The victim was standing on the driver’s side of his trailer near the front cranking up his trailer’s landing gear. It was dark and he was not wearing the high-visibility safety vest which his employer had issued him. As the other truck moved forward and swung left the right rear of its trailer struck the victim. The driver was not aware that the victim had been struck and proceeded to leave the yard. The victim died at the scene.