

There's got to be a better way

a true story



If you unload freight, you see it all the time - crushed boxes on the bottom, with a stack leaning precariously. Or you've seen boxes stacked so high you can barely reach the loose cargo on top.

This is the story of a 48-year-old truck driver who was injured on the job.

His box trailer was loaded in rows of boxes which he was unloading using a roller to roll down to the customer. The boxes were stacked about 8 feet high. One stack started to fall on him and as he pushed it back a small, heavy box on top fell off and hit him in the shoulder, spraining his shoulder.

That painful injury caused him to miss more than 6 weeks of work.

The injury didn't need to happen. Company policy is to not load higher than a person is tall. Additionally, there was room in the trailer for shorter stacks.

Prevent injuries. Train loaders to load safely.

Tips to live by

DRIVERS

- Report unsafe conditions to your employer.
- Take the time to plan the unload.
- It's not safe to carry boxes down ladders. If you must use a ladder to reach a high box, plan to move the box to the next stack that has been partially unloaded.
- Use mechanical devices to lift whenever possible.

EMPLOYERS

- Encourage your workers to report unsafe conditions.
- Each time you hire new loaders, teach them to consider the driver who unloads. Discuss how loads can shift and crush in transit.
- If your shipper loads your trailers, inform them when trailers are loaded improperly, even if you have to remind them every few weeks.
- Provide sturdy step ladders and train workers to plan the unload at each stop.