



IT REALLY HAPPENED

Fall 2017

True Stories, Real Truck Drivers, Serious Injuries

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Is safety your Achilles' heel?

A 41-year-old, general freight driver severely injured her lower leg while straining to push a converter dolly.

The truck driver was connecting a set of double trailers for a night run of drugstore deliveries. She pulled the rear trailer from the terminal's loading dock, parked it, and then backed the lead trailer up to it. The driver left enough space between the trailers for a short converter dolly that would keep the set within legal length limits. The heavy steel dolly lacked a jack and drawbar-mounted handle, making it hard to grasp and lift for moving.



Dolly with recommended safety features: counter-balanced frame, single wide tires, drawbar-mounted oversized handles, and front leg.

A sudden onset of pain jolted the driver when she pushed and rocked the dolly by its drawbar toward the lead trailer's rear pintle hook. Vomiting and breaking out into a sweat, the injured driver hobbled back to the truck's cab to contact her employer, who had her call 911.

After ambulance transport to a local hospital, the driver learned she had torn her right Achilles tendon, a fibrous cord connecting the calf muscles and heel bone. The driver missed nearly a year of work to recover from orthopedic surgery.



Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

The Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis (TIRES) project developed this narrative to alert trucking industry employers and employees of a serious injury of a worker in Washington State. The narrative is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the injury.

TIRES is a project of the Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) program at the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries. The project is supported in part by a grant from the CDC/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# U60 OH008487). For more information and free training resources, contact the SHARP program at: 1-888-667-4277, or visit:

KeepTruckingSafe.org

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TIPS TO LIVE BY Management

- Use counter-balanced dollies with single wide tires, drawbar-mounted oversize handles, and front leg to ease lifting and moving.
- Replace or retrofit swivel caster-fitted dollies with safer equipment to prevent injury on gravel or other rough surfaces.
- Train drivers to inspect, move, and connect dollies based on Job Hazard Assessments.

Drivers

- Inspect dolly and yard surface before use.
- Wear gloves and never hold pintle ring.
- Lift drawbar using leg strength and handle or forward-most practical grab location.
- Move dolly centering body weight between legs, and using hips for leverage over drawbar.
- Keep drawbar at waist height and below backward tipping point.
- Move dolly with tractor or seek co-worker assistance if possible.

All Employees

- Actively look for hazards and share injury prevention ideas with management.