

Liftgate Hang-Ups Are Safety Let Downs

A 47-year-old truck driver injured his neck and back trying to stop a shipment from falling off his truck's broken liftgate.

The driver arrived at the customer site early on a Friday with a heavy load of valuable office equipment. He hauled the freight in a standard box truck equipped with a rail-style hydraulic liftgate.

Unaware of its unsafe condition, he stood on the liftgate platform, and flipped the control switch to lower it. As the platform dropped, its left runner got stuck in the rail. The platform tilted unevenly to the right. The load shifted close to



Rail-style liftgate.* Arrow points to where runner became stuck in rail.

*Not actual liftgate in story.

the edge. The driver reacted in a sudden twisting motion to save the freight from crashing down. He felt a twinge in his back, but ignored it.

As the day wore on, the driver felt worse. By Monday morning he could not move. A medical exam showed serious strain injuries to his neck and back. He has not returned to work after many months of therapy.



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.

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KeepTruckingSafe.org

TIPS TO LIVE BY Management

- Provide proper liftgate inspection, operation, and safety training to drivers and mechanics.
- Make sure mechanics regularly perform liftgate maintenance and parts replacement according to manufacturer's requirements.

Drivers

- Make sure you are fully trained to use liftgates safely.
- Conduct pre-trip inspections checking for liftgate damage, fluid leaks, unsafe alteration, or poor maintenance.
- Never operate a faulty liftgate until problems are properly corrected.
- Report liftgate problems immediately to supervisor or mechanic.

All Employees

- Report all injuries as soon as possible to supervisor or management.