

# Delivery truck driver fatally injured in fall

## What happened

On July 12, 2004, a driver employed for 18 years by a commercial bakery suffered a fatal head injury while unloading his truck. The incident happened at the loading dock inside the warehouse of the bakery's distribution center. He parked his delivery vehicle parallel to the loading dock and, using the truck's side door, unloaded empty bread racks and other items. The truck was positioned 4 feet from the loading dock and a metal dock plate was positioned from the side door of the truck to the loading dock. The loading dock stood 4 feet 3 inches above the concrete floor of the distribution center. The truck bed was 4 feet above the floor. There was a standard guardrail system around the perimeter of the loading dock. After emptying the truck the victim was observed tidying-up the loading dock. Several minutes later a coworker found the victim lying on his back on the concrete floor between the loading dock and the truck. The dock plate was detached from the truck and was found resting on the floor of the loading dock. He was bleeding from the head. He was taken to a hospital where he died of his injuries two days later. The coroner determined that the victim died of "blunt head trauma" as a result of a fall.

## How can you prevent a similar incident?

- Ensure good housekeeping in the loading dock area, to reduce the possibility of slips or trips.
- Clearly mark floor transition at open dock edge.
- Install and assure use of barriers for dock openings.
- Provide dedicated stair or ladder access from ground to dock level.
- Re-design dock to hinge dock plate so that it functions similar to a draw bridge eliminating need to manually move and when raised closes off opening.
- Conduct analyses/audits of loading dock areas and operations to include:
  - Policies and procedures
  - Dock plate/ramp positioning
  - Load configurations
  - Dock equipment systems
  - Dock design/layout
  - Types of vehicles using dock
  - Interaction of employees with material handling systems
- Train employees in dock safety procedures and practices



A series of work-related safety and health injury prevention tips for the trucking industry



Incident location

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