

# Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis

## TIRESPIN

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### Welcome to TIRESPIN!

This is the third edition of a quarterly newsletter from the Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis (TIRES) project. TIRESPIN's goal is to share information and severity of worker injuries in the trucking industry.

Please Visit Our Website:

[www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Trucking/](http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Trucking/)

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## “Don’t Fall for It”

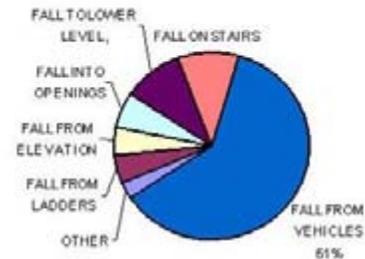
### Slips, trips and falls are avoidable, costly injuries

#### Slips, trips and falls

Injuries from work-related falls in the Washington State trucking industry can be very serious, resulting in costly claims, lost productivity and untold human costs. In Washington State from 1997-2004 there were over 3,000 compensable<sup>1</sup> State Fund and Self-insured fall related claims, most resulting in paid time away from work. Fall related claims made up over 16% of all compensable claims in trucking during this period with an average cost over \$25,000<sup>2</sup> and an average of 134 days of time loss. Two compensable fall claims were fatal.



1997-2004 Non-fatal compensable claims - Falls from elevation



#### Types of injuries resulting from falls

Compensable fall injuries from 1997-2004 are almost evenly split between falls from elevation and falls from same level (53% and 47% respectively), over 60% of the falls from elevation were the result of falling from a vehicle. Most falls resulted in injuries to the back, knee or multiple body parts.

<sup>1</sup> Compensable claims are defined here as accepted claims where more than medical only costs were associated with the claim (e.g., time loss, permanent partial disability).

<sup>2</sup> Costs adjusted to 2004 dollars.

- Be alert
- Identify trouble areas
- Eliminate hazards
- Report defects
- Offer safety suggestions

*“Complacency and being in too big of a hurry, not paying attention to surroundings.”*

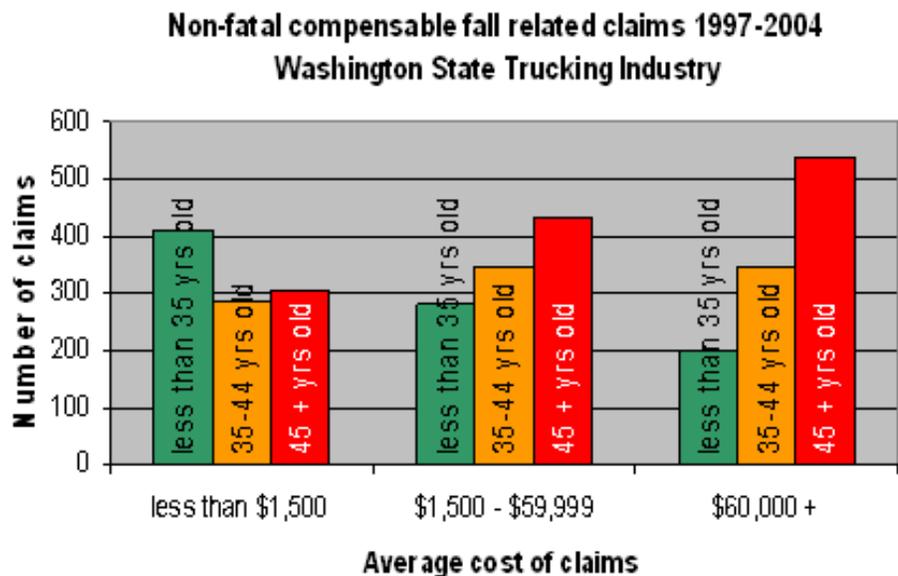
*“Slow down and be more aware of what you are doing and others around you.”*

Employee survey quotes on cause and solution.

## Slips, trips and falls

### Who is getting injured from falls?

The average age of workers at the time of injury was 42 years old, with an average time on their job of 3.5 years. Although younger workers in the trucking industry have a higher frequency of compensable claims, workers over 45 years old have significantly higher claim costs and greater time loss for fall injuries than younger claimants. As you can see in the figure below, over 40% of claims for employees 45 years and older average \$60,000 or more.



Slip, trip and fall injuries are not just a part of doing business, they are costly preventable injuries that adversely affect both the company and employee's bottom line. The average age of commercial drivers in Washington state is 49 years old,<sup>3</sup> which places a large portion of the workforce in the higher cost/time loss brackets. Slip, trip and fall prevention should be at the top of safety and health injury prevention efforts for both companies and employees. The TIRES project is working with businesses and employees to address slips, trips, falls and other serious injuries affecting the trucking industry. For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Trucking/>.

<sup>3</sup>Washington State Department of Health CFHS. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Supported in part by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Cooperative Agreement U58/CCU002118-16, 2002.

# Preventing Fall Injuries from Handling Freight and Securing Loads

Drivers and dock workers who load or unload freight are exposed to slip/trip/fall incidents. Slips, trips or falls can result when moving freight that is so large that it blocks the driver's or dock worker's view of where he/she is walking. Slips, trips or falls can also result from uneven surfaces between the truck bed and the dock or ramp. Other sources for slips, trips or falls include loose material on the trailer or dock floor such as banding straps, broken pieces of pallets, discarded shrink wrap, etc.

Securing loads onto a flatbed or inside a trailer also presents the potential for slipping, tripping or falling. For drivers of flatbed trailers, a common problem is the web strap or chain that comes loose or breaks when it is tightened. This usually causes the driver to lose his/her balance and fall either off the trailer or on the ground. Another hazard is having to climb on machinery to attach or route straps or chains. Without dedicated steps or footholds, a driver is at risk of slipping and falling. Inside a dry van trailer, left over pallets, loose banding or shrink wrap or cargo bars can present trip hazards.

## **Preventive measures for employers are as follows:**

- Replace worn straps and chains.
- Replace bent cargo bars, replace worn end pads or worn locking mechanisms.
- Establish and enforce good housekeeping practices.
- Invest in ratcheting winch tie downs to minimize hazards associated with the use of a winch bar.
- Provide dock plates that are full width and offer gradual transitions.
- Inspect walking surfaces to identify any holes, raised elevations, sloping surfaces, or slippery surfaces. Correct as necessary.

## **Preventive measures for employees are as follows:**

- Inspect and replace worn straps and chains.
- Inspect cargo bars for bends, worn end pads or worn locking mechanisms. Replace as needed.
- When using a cart, dolly or pallet jack, push up the ramp, and back down the ramp. It is easier to control when you are below the load rather than above it.
- Observe walking surfaces to identify any holes, raised elevations, sloping surfaces, or slippery surfaces.
- If the surface is slippery take smaller steps rather than large ones.
- Follow good housekeeping practices.
- Use dock plates that are full width and offer gradual transitions.



Damaged cargo bars taken out of service.



Secured freight supported by steel frame structure designed to accommodate two tier cargo stacking.

TIRES – Getting traction on worker safety

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#### Make Sure You Receive TIRESPIN

To be added to the mailing list for TIRESPIN, you can contact us through the TIRES website, by email at [EDWW235@LNI.wa.gov](mailto:EDWW235@LNI.wa.gov) or by phone at 1-888-667-4277. Please specify whether you would like to receive the newsletter by US mail or by email.

## Available Resources

The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries has safety and health resources for you to use:

#### Research

<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Trucking/Default.asp>

#### Video Library, Workshops, and Online Safety Courses

<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/TrainTools>

#### Publications

[www.LNI.wa.gov/FormPublications/PubsBySub.asp#wisha](http://www.LNI.wa.gov/FormPublications/PubsBySub.asp#wisha)

#### Rule-Specific Tools

<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Rules/HelpTools>

Other Trucking safety resources available on the web include:

#### British Health and Safety Executive

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/haulage/index.htm>