

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:

71-268-2025

REPORT DATE:

July 10, 2025

INCIDENT DATE:

January 9, 2024

VICTIM:

63 years old

INDUSTRY:

Lessor of Other Real Estate
Property

OCCUPATION:

General Maintenance Worker

SCENE:

Mobile home park

EVENT TYPE:

Caught in or between /
Building materials



Rear view of truck cargo area.

[For a slideshow version,
click here.](#)



This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or the cause of the injury. Developed by WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (WA FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. WA FACE is supported in part by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# 5U60OH008487). For more information visit www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face.

Maintenance Worker Crushed by Plywood in Service Truck

SUMMARY

A 63-year-old maintenance worker died after being crushed in a service truck by a stack of plywood. He worked for his employer, a mobile home park business, for 16 years doing general building and grounds maintenance.

He had loaded 11 four-foot by eight-foot plywood panels in the back of an enclosed body service truck a week before. The panels were stacked upright against the left side of the truck body with the long edge down.

On the day of the incident, the worker arrived at the company shop a few minutes before his employer. When the employer arrived, he saw the truck's rear cargo doors opened, walked toward them, and looked inside. He found the worker sitting unresponsive with his back against a dolly that was strapped to the right side of the truck body. The stack of plywood had shifted to the right and pinned the worker by the neck against a metal cross brace between the dolly's rails. The employer then went in the truck and used his back to push the plywood up enough to pull the worker out. He called 911 and started CPR. When first responders came, they pronounced the worker dead at the scene.

Following the incident, investigators found:

- Each plywood panel weighed between 35-40 lbs., for a total weight around 450 lbs.
- Based on the worker's body position and the direction of his head, he had likely been standing and facing the plywood when something made it shift and fall toward him.
- It is unknown if the plywood had been secured or not.
- Lumber and ladders laying on the truck floor may have presented a tripping hazard.

REQUIREMENTS

Employers must:

- Provide your employees a workplace free from recognized hazards that are causing, or are likely to cause, serious injury or death. See [WAC 296-800-11005](http://wac.wa.gov/296-800-11005)

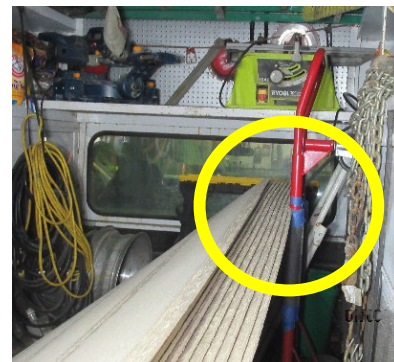
RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators concluded, that to help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Ensure workers load plywood flat and evenly on the truck floor and secure it with ratchet straps at multiple points. Use a panel rack or trailer if truck floor space is limited or if hauling plywood frequently. Require workers to use a buddy system when loading and unloading heavy cargo.
- Develop your written accident prevention program (APP) to have a service truck cargo policy with requirements to safely organize, secure, and store tools, equipment, and materials inside vehicle cargo spaces. Train workers how to meet requirements and enforce the policy.
- Perform a job hazard analysis (JHA) that assesses service truck cargo area hazards, identifies cargo organization and storage management solutions, and develops best practices, including daily checks to keep cargo secure, uncluttered, and easy to access. Update the JHA when new vehicles with different cargo area designs are used and when new types of cargo are hauled.

RESOURCES

[Work Truck Organization Tips & Ideas](#) — Adrian Steel



Crush point between plywood and dolly.