Truck incident in log yard: Good habits reduce injury

Location: Okanagan Falls, BC
Date of Incident: January 8, 2013

Details of Incident: A log truck driver with 40+ years of experience was driving a tridem truck with a tridem hayrack to deliver a load of pulp logs to a chipping operation during a heavy snowfall.

The driver is very conscientious about always using his seatbelt, even in situations that would normally be considered low risk, and is meticulous about having a clean cab with all items secured.

As he left the scales and started up the ramp to the unloading location he lost sight of the road edge due to whiteout conditions. The roadway in this section is a wide right curve, elevated about 3 feet above grade with a running surface about 12 feet wide at the point of the incident.

The hayrack tracked to the inside and off the road, tipped towards the passenger side and dropped the 3 feet off the roadway. The truck came to stop but the twisting motion in the hayrack torqued the truck over onto the passenger side with substantial force and whipping action.

The driver sustained a concussion, severe bruising (including bruises from his seatbelt) and minor cuts. The concussion appears to be the result of the severe force as the truck went over. It is very likely that the drivers’ injuries would have been much more substantial if he hadn’t been belted in.

During the investigation several drivers noted that they had identified this section as “tricky” but hadn’t passed this information onto the yard manager or weigh-master.
Recommended Preventative Actions:

1. At safety meetings re-enforce the importance and value of seat belt use whenever the vehicle or equipment is in motion or operation.

2. Conduct inspections to ensure all operators are using seatbelts properly and that they have a clean cab free of loose tools or items that could become deadly projectiles.

3. Supervisors should re-enforce the need for all employees, subcontractors and others on their sites to speak up about any issues. Act promptly on any concerns raised to encourage workers to bring suggestions forward.

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