



SAFETY ALERT

TRUCK OPERATOR TRAPPED IN VACUUM TRUCK TANK

| | |
|---|---|
| Safety Alert: #10 - 2010 | RELEASE DATE: MAY 12, 2010 |
| Incident Type: Equipment failure with no safety zone | Country and Region: Western Canada |

Description of Incident:

- An operator of a vacuum truck noticed a rock lodged between the agitator paddle and the wall of the tank making it inoperable.
- The operator opened the rear door and tried to engage the safety latch mechanism, to keep the door in the open position. The operator could not get this safety latch to work properly but elected to stand on the bumper with the door opened about 2-3 ft while attempting to dislodge the rock with a shovel.
- While he was striking the rock with the shovel, the door (approx. 2000 lbs) began slowly closing because of the hydraulic ram. To prevent crushing of his legs, the operator jumped in to the tank. He was able to wedge a shovel in the door seal to prevent it from completely closing.
- A Construction project was taking place on the same site but no one knew what the driver was doing. After 1 hour and 20 minutes, a Construction Supervisor came to the vacuum truck and noticed there was no operator around the truck. He walked around the back of the truck and heard the operator calling for help. He spoke to the operator and was instructed how to open the door. The operator incurred no injuries.

What Caused It:

- The operator attempted to free rock without the protection of the safety mechanism to keep the 2000 lb door in open position
- Potential for door failure and resulting crush point not identified and escape route limited during failure event

Corrective Actions:

- Identify safety zones and required procedures to control work in these safety zones.
- All safety controls and / or barriers must be in place prior to any work being performed
- Safety Control devices need to be include in preventative maintenance and inspection programs

Contact:

For more information of event, please contact safety@enform.ca

DISCLAIMER:

This Safety Alert is designed to prevent similar incidents by communicating the information at the earliest possible opportunity. Accordingly, the information may change over time. It may be necessary to obtain updates from the source before relying upon the accuracy of the information contained herein. This material is presented for information purposes only. Managers and supervisors should evaluate this information to determine if it can be applied to their own situations and practices.