

**SAFETY ALERT - #06-2009**  
**WORKER FATALITY WHILE MOVING A SUSPENDED LOAD**  
**RELEASE DATE: MAY 11, 2009**

<b>Function:</b> Oilfield Trucking	<b>Incident Date:</b> June 12, 2008
<b>Incident Type:</b> Contact with Mobile Equipment	<b>Country and Region:</b> Canada, Alberta

**Summary**

A swamper was walking behind the pole truck in the “danger zone” and tripped as the truck was backing up with the load. The worker was fatally injured when the vehicle drove over him.

*NOTE: This alert was submitted to Enform following a recent fatality; however this is not an isolated incident. Five similar fatalities have been identified in the oil and gas industry over the past two years. These are summarized on page three of this alert.*

**Description of Incident:**

June 2008 - A drilling rig was being moved to a rack site. On the second day of the job, with approximately a dozen loads left to transport off the site, a pole truck driver and his swamper were relocating a grated landing across the lease.

A 4-leg sling was secured to each corner of the landing and it was raised off the ground with the pole truck winch. The load was not secured to the truck and tag lines were not used to control the suspended load. The driver proceeded to move the landing in reverse at a walking speed. At some point in the move, the swamper entered into the danger zone at the back of the truck to stabilize and guide the suspended load. Halfway across the lease, the swamper stumbled, lost his balance and fell down directly in the path of the rear wheels of the pole truck. Neither the driver nor the swamper were able to react quickly enough to avoid having the rear passenger side tires drive over the swamper’s legs and mid torso.



**Causal Analysis:**

- Standards (Worker compliance with documented safe work rules and acceptable industry practices):** There are a number of causes relating to a culture in this industry sector that tolerates risk taking in the danger zone while trucks and/or loads are moving. The specific root causes are in the areas of; compliance with rules and industry practices; communication & worker understanding of the company’s standards; accepting accountability to be intolerant of at-risk behaviour, and auditing and evaluating the company’s operations for compliance to expected safe work practices.
- Work Direction (Worker responsibility & task preparation):** There are multiple layers of supervision onsite during a rig move. Each task, even if it is apparently a low-

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risk task, must have a task leader to assume preparation, review and coordination responsibilities to accomplish the work safely.

### **We Can Prevent Similar Incidents**

#### **1. Working to Accepted Industry Practices:**

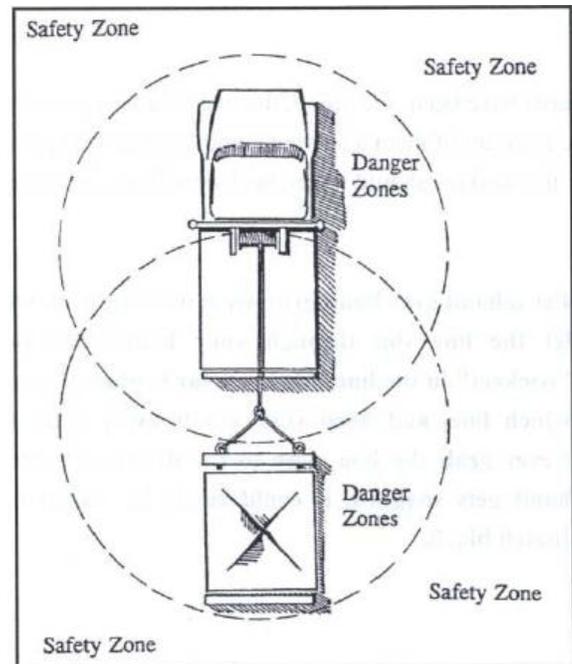
- a. Narrow suspended loads moved by a pole truck must be secured to the truck or controlled by the use of tag lines outside of the danger zone.
- b. Workers will not be present in the danger zone when the truck is moving.
- c. Drivers will stop their truck when their swamper, who is participating in the task, is not completely visible.

#### **2. Understanding and Working to the Company's Standards:**

- a. Establish a proactive culture that adheres to and supports safe work rules & expectations through:
  - i. improved communication,
  - ii. improved understanding of worker accountability for safety of themselves and coworkers,
  - iii. intolerance for silent acceptance of deviation from safe work practices,
  - iv. the application of a job specific worker observation program to stop and correct at-risk behaviours and positively recognize safe work behaviours.

#### **3. Supervisory Responsibilities:**

- a. Establish a clear understanding that every task has a designated (competent) leader who is responsible to prepare and accomplish the task safely.
- b. Use pre-task planning "walk-throughs" throughout the work day to calibrate the work team to the agreed upon approach that will be taken to conduct specific tasks.



### **Contact:**

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### **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.



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**Other Recent Contact with Mobile Equipment Fatalities**

- January 2007 A 47-year old worker, employed as a plant operator, was assisting a truck driver hook up a trailer. He was run over by the tractor unit.  
**Based on Alberta WHS Fatality Report: WHS-PUB\_FR-2007-01-20**  
Link: [http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB\\_FR-2007-01-20.pdf](http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_FR-2007-01-20.pdf)
- March 2007 A 31-year old worker, employed as a medic, was guiding a truck driver who was reversing a tank truck with an attached pup when the worker was pinned between the pup and another piece of equipment.  
**Based on Alberta WHS Fatality Report: WHS-PUB\_FR-2007-03-11**  
Link: [http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB\\_FR-2007-03-11.pdf](http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_FR-2007-03-11.pdf)
- November 2007 A 43-year old worker, employed as a truck driver, was in the process of helping load an empty 400 lb oil storage tank onto a flat bed truck and got pinned between the tank and the truck.  
**Based on Workplace Incident Fatalities Investigated in 2007 by Alberta Workplace Health and Safety (Page 5)**  
Link: [http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB\\_wpfatal\\_2007.pdf](http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_wpfatal_2007.pdf)
- January 2008 A 38-year old worker was fatally injured when he became pinned against an oilfield tank by the pressure truck he was operating. The truck was accidentally put into gear by the worker who was immediately outside the truck. The truck moved forward and pinned the worker against the tank.  
**Based on Workplace Incident Fatalities Investigated in 2008 by Alberta Workplace Health and Safety (Page 2)**  
Link: [http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB\\_wpfatal\\_2008.pdf](http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_wpfatal_2008.pdf)
- August 2008 A 20 year-old worker was run over by a truck while he was helping a fellow employee to back up the truck.  
**Based on Workplace Incident Fatalities Accepted by the Workers Compensation Board in 2008 (Page 5)**  
Link: [http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB\\_wpfatal\\_wcb\\_2008.pdf](http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WHS/WHS-PUB_wpfatal_wcb_2008.pdf)