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Friday Safety Brief

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Roll-Away Incidents

An uncontrolled vehicle roll-away occurs in all facets of the transportation industry, including buses, trucks and all types of property and passenger carrying vehicles. They are one of the most common, yet easiest accidents to prevent.

How Do They Occur?

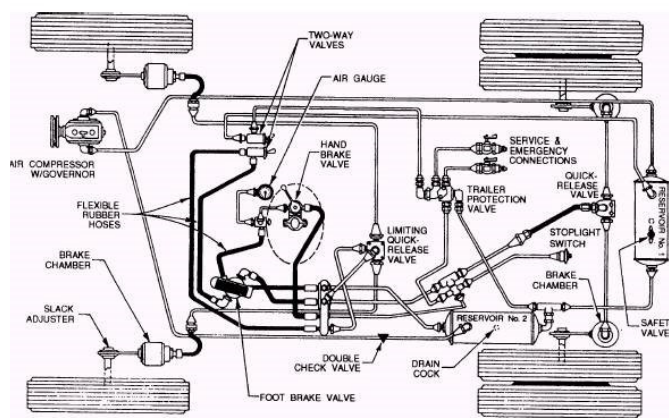


- Bulk liquid petroleum tanker companies experience tanker transport vehicles rolling away during unloading, snapping delivery hoses from fittings, releasing very volatile and ecological hazardous material into the environment.
- Freight companies experience straight trucks and semi-configured van trailers pushing away from dock doors upon being entered by fork-lifts.
- Yard switchers experience jiff-lox's (coupling devices) rolling away when staging twin trailer configurations.

Safety professionals can only wonder how this can possibly happen knowing the equipment involved in every roll away has installed braking systems. Many drivers involved claim mechanical defects where evidence almost always indicate otherwise.

In vehicles with air brake systems, it was driver negligence for not setting the tractor emergency brake (yellow knob) or the trailer air supply (red knob); while all the time leaving the transmission in neutral. Vehicles having mechanical brake systems resulted in the emergency brake not applied, again with the transmission left in neutral. Tankers roll away when the delivery driver does not set the tractor and trailer brakes, not engaging the brake bar, not using the rear external vapor recovery fitting or bypassing the interlock brake valve due to airline freezing problems. Yard Switchers forget to set the jiff-lox brake when hooking up doubles, allowing the dolly to roll away. Especially tragic is listening to the reasons why a fork-lift fell off the back of a trailer, crushing the operator, when the trailer rolled away from the loading dock door.

An additional reason for the roll away is that the equipment wheels were not chocked. Regardless of the type of installed braking systems, roll away accidents can be prevented by the driver engaging the parking brake, placing the transmission in gear and using a wheel chock block. OSHA no longer requires use of chock blocks. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration now governs use of chock blocks. OSHA tried to cover the use of chock blocks under its General Industry Standard 1910.178 for commercial motor vehicles. However, the FMCSA cited their regulation 49CFR 33.41(a) requiring the availability and use of parking brake systems, therefore taking precedence over OSHA's regulation.



The FMCSA further states their regulation was written specifically to protect truck drivers and anyone else who might be injured by inadvertent movement of a parked vehicle, including those individuals whose occupations bring them in contact with trailers.

Regardless of whose regulation we must comply with, the bottom line is to prevent roll away accidents. Every company must have written policies outlining the proper sequence of securing a parked, unattended commercial motor vehicle. These policies are to be in writing, reviewed with all employees, ensuring understanding, then holding them accountable to that policy.

Remember, OSHA and FMCSA regulations are considered the minimum requirements employers must comply with for the safety of both commercial motor vehicle driver and work place employees. If a \$ 30.00 non-skid rubber chock block can prevent equipment from rolling away; why debate on whose regulation it is to comply with? Like the Nike advertisement says;

"Just Do It."