Truck Drivers — Vehicle Capabilities

Best Practice Series
BP-41

Many fatalities in the mining industry involve surface haulage. Many of these fatalities involve trucks.

Some of the causes of truck accidents have been: loss of control of the vehicle; faulty brakes or other defective equipment; driving too fast for conditions; the truck being overloaded; use of unsafe dumping practices; and use of parking procedures which did not hold the truck.

These types of accidents can occur if an operator is not familiar with the capabilities and limitations of the truck, or doesn't perform a proper pre-operation examination.

Another cause of accidents has been persons on foot getting run over by trucks, or pinned between two vehicles.

All truck drivers should:

- Be familiar with the Manufacturer's Performance Specifications for the truck.
- **Know the rated capacity** and the proper load height.

Know the braking capability of the vehicle:

» **Stopping distance;**
» **Maximum grade; and**
» **Gear/speed/grade information.**

- Perform pre-operation inspection procedures.
- Be aware of **whether the vehicle ran normally during the last shift**. Are there deficiencies that need to be corrected?
- Be familiar with the maintenance requirements and records. Has the necessary maintenance been performed?
- Understand the vehicle's **instrumentation and gauges, the normal operating ranges**, and the alarm conditions.
- Be familiar with the controls; controls may differ on each vehicle.
- Understand the use of electrical retarder systems, if so equipped.
- Be aware of the **vehicle's blind spots**.
- **Check blind spots on walk-around.**
- Sound horn and follow established procedures before moving the vehicle.
- Know the **traffic patterns** in use.
- Know safe **parking procedures – don't park in another vehicle's blind area.**

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