

Truck Drivers – Safe Operating Procedures

Best Practice Series
BP-40



Many surface haulage fatalities have occurred from:

- **drivers attempting to jump** from a truck that is out of control;
- trucks going over the edge at dump points due to overtravel or the **collapse of the edge of the slope**;
- drivers being run over after parking their truck when the truck rolled; or
- loss of control due to equipment failure.

Many other fatalities and injuries have been avoided through skilled operation of the vehicles, knowledge of potential hazards, and the proper use of safety equipment. Truck drivers should consider the following points, to be prepared to avoid or minimize accidents.

- Have you received training for the piece of equipment you are operating?
- **Do you know what to do in case of:**
 - » Runaway/Rollover
 - » Engine failure
 - » Steering problem
 - » Brake failure
 - » Tire failure
 - » Fire
- **Always wear your seat belt.** It's perhaps the single most important thing you can do to avoid being badly injured or killed while operating a truck.

- **Don't rely on a berm to stop your vehicle.** The typical axle-height berm will not, by itself, prevent a haul truck from leaving the roadway.
- **Test brakes** before going down a grade.
- If you lose control of the truck or roll it over, **stay in the cab; don't attempt to jump free of the truck.** Staying in the cab with your seat belt fastened is your best chance to avoid serious injury.
- Know and follow safe loading and dumping procedures.
- Do not drive if you are **tired or drowsy**; operating safely takes alertness and concentration.
- Do not drive if you are **under the influence of drugs or alcohol**; impaired judgment increases the chances of an accident.
- Know and follow traffic patterns and rules.
- **Reduce your speed where conditions warrant**, such as at steeper or longer grades, around curves, at night, in congested areas, and under wet, snowy, icy, or foggy conditions.
- Communicate, such as by sounding the horn, before passing.
- Keep a **safe following distance**.
- Follow **safe parking procedures**. When parked on a grade, the wheels should be adequately chocked and turned toward the bank.
- If not sure of any procedure, such as a traffic pattern or a dumping practice, **stop and ask**.
- **Report any unusual or potentially dangerous roadway conditions**, such as a boulder on the roadway, to the appropriate person.