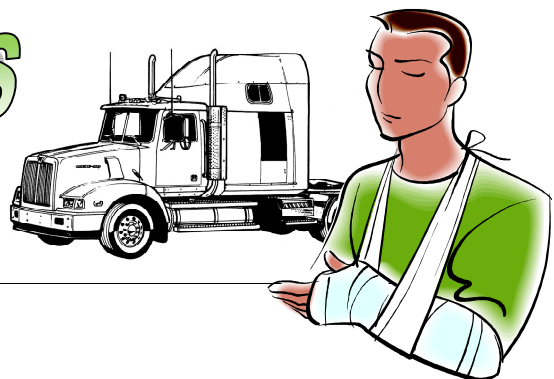


REAL LIFE LESSONS

FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



Blown Away on an Interstate

Those who pull van trailers immediately understand the significance of this topic. Vans have a very large surface area and when the wind blows the driver knows – most of the time. However, that was not the case last February in western Kentucky because the wind came from out of no where and Phil had no idea what was getting ready to happen. If he had, then he would have taken some precautionary action.

Weather patterns vary based upon the location and the season. In some places the weather can be very unpredictable during transitional seasons like late winter and early spring. Such was the case in western Kentucky. Warm air was being blown up from the south in front of an approaching cold front. When the cold front is strong the southern winds will also be strong, and sometimes contain gusts. It was one of these gusts that lifted Phil's left rear trailer tandems off the road and eventually caused Phil to lose steering control. His reaction resulted in an overturned tractor and trailer, some minor injuries to himself and a blocked Interstate.

LIFE LESSON

Fortunately for Phil his injuries were minor. He has always been an advocate for wearing seatbelts and this event proved his point. Had he not been wearing one then he would have most likely been ejected from his cab and then crushed. Phil's good luck continued. No other vehicles were involved in the mishap and that was hard to believe because the traffic on the Interstate was moderate and he had just been passed by a car. While awaiting the arrival of an ambulance Phil received some immediate first aid from one of the many motorists who were stopped behind his overturned truck. This gave Phil some time to reflect on the event and see if there was anything he could learn from it.

Phil added three "notes" to his memory bank. 1) Prior to driving a route, conduct a review of the weather forecast. What the weather conditions are at 8 a.m. in North Carolina has no bearing on what the forecasted weather may be at 4 p.m. in western Kentucky. 2) Look and listen. Look at what is happening to other drivers and even the roadside vegetation. This can signal high, gusty winds. Also, listen to what other truckers might be saying on the CB or what the local radio stations may be broadcasting. 3) When the wind picks up, speed should slow down. Speed increases the trucks momentum and if the wind gets under a truck that has momentum in the same direction of the wind, then the end result is a truck that may just get blown away.



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