

REAL LIFE LESSONS

FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



For the Want of a Nail...

Those who remember the old saying by Benjamin Franklin will recognize the title of this newsletter. What Ben wanted people to understand was that preventive efforts, usually easier and cheaper activities, most often will prevent a larger and more significant loss from occurring. To quote his saying in total he said, “For want of a nail the shoe was lost, For want of a shoe the horse was lost, For want of a horse the rider was lost, For want of a rider the battle was lost, For want of a battle the kingdom was lost, And all for the want of a horseshoe-nail.”

Much has changed in this country since Mr. Franklin penned his advice in Poor Richard’s Almanac. Just consider the advances in technology since the mid 1750’s. It is overwhelming. But what is even more astounding is the fact that the advice offered by Ben Franklin is still appropriate.

It’s too bad that Harry had not read the “Almanac” prior to his dispatch earlier this year. He was doing what he always had done – drive a truck on a dedicated run that would put him out and back in 5 days, with a short layover in a town where a high school friend was now living. Harry liked his job; he liked his route; and he liked his old friend. Life was good – except and until.

Harry had been driving west all afternoon with the sun directly in his eyes. To make matters worse his windshield was covered in dead bugs and he was tired of straining his eyes. He couldn’t do anything about the sun, but he could surely clean off his windshield and that was the primary reason for pulling into a truck stop. He did not need any fuel so he just pulled over to the side of the large parking area and exited his truck. Then he grabbed a rag and bottle of windshield cleaner solvent that he kept in his truck for just this task. To reach the windshield he stood on the driver’s side steering tire. When he did his foot slipped and he fell on the pavement, fracturing his left wrist.

LIFE LESSON

Harry’s boss and Benjamin Franklin were both disappointed in Harry’s action because this loss could have been prevented. All drivers in Harry’s company had been provided step ladders to enable them to gain access to the trailer or the engine compartment (windshield included) without having to climb or step on unsecured footing. Harry just did not get the ladder because he thought it would take too much time. Standing on top of the tire seemed like a good idea; however, Harry did not realize that he had driven through a small puddle of diesel fuel when he pulled onto the truck stop.

In this situation the “for want of a ladder a driver was lost” is not true. The ladder was available. Harry just did not use it. Aids are provided for a reason – to aid the employee/driver. Use them.



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