

REAL LIFE LESSONS

FROM TRUCK DRIVERS INJURED AT WORK



Stiff and Tired

There's one thing about driving trucks that has not changed over the years – you still have to stay in the driver's seat to do it. And, the more you drive the longer you stay in the driver's seat. Truck manufacturers have upgraded and improved the comfort of the cab, but it is still a relatively small space that does not allow you to move around. Over time this "confinement" has a negative effect on the human body because humans are designed to move. In fact, movement improves our state of health.

When analyzing this situation three factors have been determined. 1) If an individual has been driving for a long time during his career then he may be at risk of injury. 2) If an individual has been driving for a long time during a particular dispatch then he may be at risk of injury. 3) And, if an individual's state of physical health is less than ideal then he may be at risk of injury. Add all three together and you get a fairly predictable outcome – the driver is most likely to sustain an injury. Such was the case with "The Big C" (nickname for Clarence), a seasoned truck driver.

Clarence has been driving since the early 1990's. Obviously, he has driven many miles over that time and has spent a lot of time sitting in the cab of a truck. During this time Clarence has had to live the life of a professional truck driver – eat food that may not be real healthy, try to sleep when possible, and not have the opportunity to exercise. It was accumulating and building. On this particular dispatch he was covering for another driver on an out and back run that should only take four days. Late on the first day Clarence felt some discomfort in his lower back. On the second day it became very uncomfortable and caused him to sit in funny positions to make it go away. On the third day he was in real pain, but he was headed home. Finally, on the fourth day he did make it home, but could not climb out of the cab of his truck. The company had to summons an ambulance to extract him from his truck! "The Big C" had herniated a big D (lumbar disk).

LIFE LESSON

There are several lessons to be learned from Clarence's painful experience and most of them you have probably already heard. 1) Only eat healthy food. 2) Moderate the amount of food you eat. 3) If you have been prescribed medications then you should take them as directed. 4) Drink plenty of clear liquids (preferably water) through the day. 5) Don't smoke. 6) Limit your consumption of caffeine. 7) Get at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week.

Here's a lesson in addition to those. When you feel discomfort, and it is persistent, tell someone. If "The Big C" had said something on the first day of his dispatch he may have been spared the agony of a herniated disk.



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