

Road freight

Unloading tautliners in high-wind conditions

What is the problem?

Drivers of tautliner (curtain-sided) vehicles can be struck by side curtains and their fittings while unloading in high-wind conditions.

For example, a truck driver was knocked unconscious and suffered a broken nose and fractured eye socket after being hit by the side curtains of his tautliner vehicle. While the driver was pulling back the side curtains, a gust of wind pushed the curtain forward and the vertical pole in the curtain struck the driver in the face – he was found by the forklift truck operator in an unconscious state and taken to hospital.

What are the risks?

The driver preparing for unloading a tautliner vehicle in the example above was doing the task alone and in windy conditions.

There was also no documented procedure in place about loading and unloading tautliner vehicles for the driver to follow.

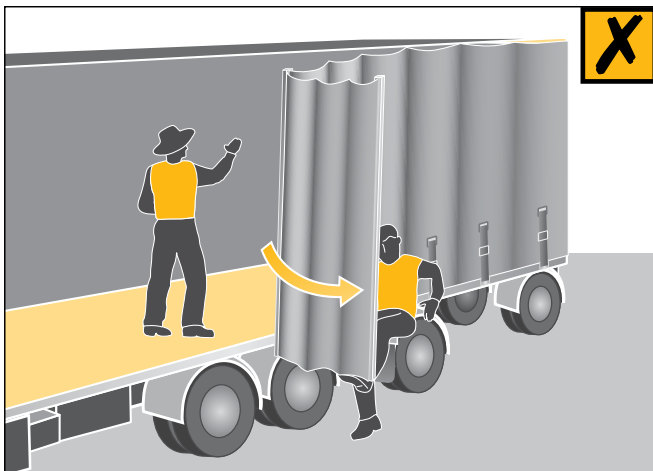
What is a solution to the problem?

The risk of injury can be eliminated or reduced by using preventative measures, such as:

- Conduct a risk assessment to identify whether loading/unloading areas are susceptible to high-wind conditions. Determine whether:
 - the worksite can be configured to minimise high-wind conditions, and/or
 - the task can be relocated or the truck repositioned to an area that is not so prone to wind.
- Signage should be put up at warehouse loading bay entrances directing drivers to report to the office before preparing their vehicles for loading or unloading. An assessment of weather conditions (and short induction if driver is new) should be conducted after driver signs in. If weather conditions are assessed to be too windy, organise for the forklift operator to be in direct supervision. Driver will be advised when to release the load binders, slide back the curtains, remove the gates and back the tautliner into the loading bay.

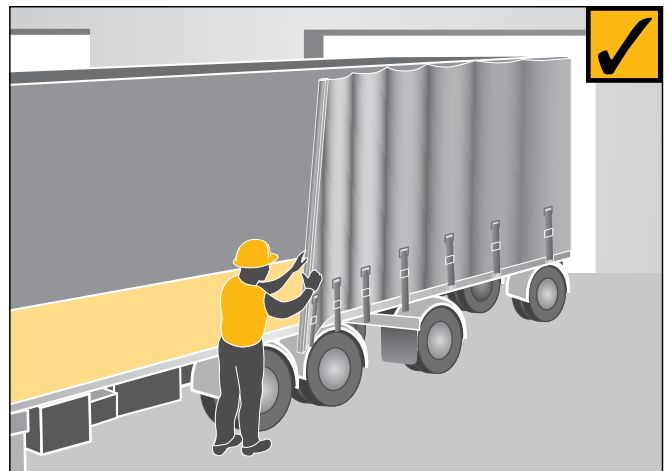
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The Problem



Unloading tautliner in high-wind conditions can blow curtain and attached poles into driver, causing injury.

A Solution



Removing curtain in a sheltered area eliminates high-wind conditions and minimises risk to driver.

A Health and Safety Solution

What is a solution to the problem? (cont)

- Follow the documented safe procedure for unloading and loading tautliner vehicles – each employer will have a site-specific process.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including hard hats and eye protection, when loading and unloading tautliners in high-wind conditions.

Further Information

WorkSafe Advisory Service

Toll-free: 1800 136 089

Email: info@worksafe.vic.gov.au

worksafe.vic.gov.au

Related WorkSafe publications

Safety by Design – Eliminating manual handling injuries in road transport, chapter five – Loading and unloading (2001).

Copies of publications can be obtained by contacting WorkSafe Advisory Service or visit WorkSafe's website.