Butcher Dies Unloading Truck



A butcher was killed by a blow to the head from a truck’s tailgate. The accident occurred at an animal by-products company that collects and butchers dead cows for processing into hides and skins. The victim was one of several employees unloading the dead animals from a semi-trailer dump truck for processing. This involved walking under the raised tailgate of the truck, hooking the cow carcass with a chain and walking out under the raised gate again. The skid steer loader operator would take over and pull the cow to the loading dock.

The gate was raised by the loader and held in the open position by an overhead wire rope hooked around the locking pins and attached to a point above the truck. Investigators said the system was inadequate. The gate was not blocked up, and workers who walked under the gate were putting themselves at risk every time.

No one witnessed the accident; but it is believed the victim was walking under the door when the wire rope slipped off of the locking pin and the tailgate fell. The victim died of head trauma.

Adhering to safe work procedures means looking at a task from every angle and considering the various risks. There are no tools more effective than your eyes and your brain. If your workplace is unsafe, speak with your employer about what can be done. Remember we’re talking about your life and the lives of others.

Source: Wisconsin Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report 05WI001