Dump Truck Operation Meeting Kit



In almost every construction site and many other kinds of workplaces articulating dump trucks or just regular dump trucks can be found. There are a lot of associated hazards with the operation of this equipment that go hand-in-hand with the task of getting loaded, hauling equipment, handling material and dumping the material. Operators of this equipment including ground personnel working around the equipment are warned not to get complacent for seemingly simple procedures.

INJURIES AND INCIDENTS ASSOCIATED WITH DUMP TRUCK OPERATIONS

Dump trucks are associated with road hazards that are highly specific to the loads they're carrying. The materials in their beds can cause accidents and injuries even if the truck itself isn't involved in a collision. Common dump truck hazards include:

- **Flying debris:** The top of the dump box is usually open. Flying debris from the box can hit a car and cause damage to another car and can cause serious traffic accidents.
- **Accidental opening or dumping:** Dump boxes can spontaneously open or get dumped while the truck is in motion. Imagine the harm that several tons of gravel or rocks can do to the cars following behind.
- **Side-opening failure:** Certain dump trucks open on the side. If the dumping mechanism fails on these types of trucks, vehicles driving next to them can be hit in traffic.
- **Bottom-opening failure:** Other dump trucks release their loads from the bottom of the bed rather than the back. Materials spilled in this way can create skidding, sliding, and drifting hazards (especially with sand or gravel loads).
- **Back over incidents of people or other equipment:** OSHA states that dump trucks followed by semi-trucks and ordinary pickups are responsible for the majority of back over incidents in the past 10 years on the job.
- **Tip over of entire truck or the bed of an articulating dump truck:** Tip overs can cause serious injury to both the operator or ground personnel.
- **Property damage incidents:** Due to the sizes of these trucks and lack of room of some job sites, there is a lot of money lost due to property damage incidents.
- **Slips, trips, and falls:** Climbing on and off of the equipment multiple times a day puts an operator at risk for falling while getting in and out of the cab.

OTHER HAZARDS

A prematurely dropped haul can be the result of a mechanical failure or defect. Depending on the circumstances, liability for injuries can be traced to:

- **Truck manufacturers:** If there are any defects with the hydraulic dump mechanisms.
- Dump truck drivers: For instance, if they disregarded road rules or were negligent.
- **Dump truck companies:** These can sometimes maintain poor safety standards for employees, or they may negligently hire drivers who have bad records.
- Sorting out liability in a dump truck crash can be complicated and typically requires the assistance of a commercial truck accident lawyer.

BEST PRACTICES WHEN OPERATING AND WORKING AROUND DUMP TRUCKS

- Avoid backing up whenever possible. Many incidents result from unnecessary backing up. Set up work areas so that operators are able to pull through instead of backing.
- Use a spotter when it is necessary and safe to do so. Spotters need to stay out of blind spots as well as away from the truck in case of tip over.
- Always dump on flat even ground. After the load is dumped pull up just enough to clear the load and put the bed down before driving off. Leaving the bed up while driving can result in contact with electrical lines as well as tip over.
- Always inspect your truck thoroughly before the start of the shift.
- Always wear your seatbelt.
- Complete inspections of work areas to look for any hazards that can create unsafe conditions for operation.
- Complete a walk around of your truck any time before you get back into the cab. Check around the truck to ensure no person, vehicles, or materials are in your blind spots.

Prevention Takeaway

Drivers, managers, mechanics and workers must also know the hazards associated with dump truck operations. Whether we’re talking about your trucks or those of a subcontractor, you are ultimately responsible for ensuring that injuries and fatalities don’t result from truck accidents that could have been prevented.

FINAL WORD

Without trucks, our country would come to a screeching halt. Trucks are used to transport goods and materials everywhere. In the utility construction industry, trucks are used to transport equipment and materials to, from and around jobsites. Other than the pickup truck, the dump truck is probably the most common truck used in the construction industry and can be found driving in and out of every jobsite.