



DRIVER SEVERS FINGER ON AUTOMATED TAILGATE

DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT

In the early hours of the morning, when it was dark, a contract tipper driver was carrying out his pre-start vehicle checks. These included opening the automatic tailgate to check for contaminants from the previous load. He then activated the switch in the cab to close the tailgate. Due to the engine only just being started, the lack of build-up of air in the tanks delayed the closure of the air activated tailgate and the clasps which secure it in place. The clasps closed as the driver was cleaning the tailgate, severing the middle finger on his left hand, which later had to be amputated in hospital.

KEY FINDINGS

- When the vehicle air tanks are fully charged, the operation of the tailgate clasps closing takes approximately 4 seconds. On this occasion it took 11 seconds.
- This is a task the driver carried out daily and had not recognised the risk previously.
- The swift actions of the site personnel helped getting the injured person the emergency assistance he required.

HOW COULD THIS HAVE BEEN AVOIDED?

- This is a task which could be carried out daily by a driver for cross contamination/quality purposes.
- A driver needs to be aware of the delay in the closing mechanism of an automatic tailgate when the vehicle's air tanks are not fully charged.
- Drivers should remain in the cab prior to undertaking the pre start check to ensure air in the vehicle is fully energised.

KEY REVIEW POINTS

- Ensure drivers are reminded of the hazards associated with tipper tailgates through induction and ongoing training.



Look after yourself and each other

Don't let anyone act unsafely, always stop unsafe practices.

Tools and Equipment

Use the right, well maintained, tools/equipment for the job. Never make do.

Safe Systems

Follow safe systems of work, site rules, signage and traffic signals.



Safety Checks

Carry out your vehicle checks before driving and make sure your load is stable and secure.



STOP THINK ACT