

# IT REALLY HAPPENED

True Stories  
Real Truck Drivers  
Serious Injuries



## Get a Grip Don't Slip

A 36-year-old, local flatbed driver suffered a broken ankle when he lost hold of a grab handle and slipped down the steps from his tractor's catwalk.

The incident occurred as the driver prepared to haul a load of heavy construction equipment.

He had just connected his tractor to a lowboy trailer, and was starting the required pre-trip vehicle safety inspection. After checking the air hoses and electrical connectors at the rear of the cab, the driver turned to climb down from the catwalk using steps attached to a side-mounted fuel tank.

He clamped his hand around a grab handle on the headache rack to support himself down the steps, but the handle's odd mounting



location broke his grasp. Unable to maintain 3-points of contact, the driver slipped, and his foot became trapped in the steps. X-rays of his swollen right ankle revealed a fractured bone. The injury resulted in direct costs of over \$26,000 and left the driver and his employer unsure about his return to work.

## TIPS TO LIVE BY

### Management

- Work with all drivers and associates to identify grab handle mounting locations that allow a firm, continuous full-hand grasp while climbing steps.
- Often check the injury prevention performance of grab handles, headache racks, and slip-resistant catwalks and steps.
- Provide training based on Job Hazard Assessments that shows drivers how to safely conduct required DOT vehicle inspections.

### Drivers

- Make sure grab handles, catwalk, and steps are securely mounted, clean, and serviceable.
- Use 3-points of contact facing vehicle, holding firmly onto grab handles, gaining stable, balanced footing, and climbing all steps.
- Wear sturdy, slip-resistant footwear with good traction.

### All Employees

- Actively look for hazards and share injury prevention ideas with management.



Washington State Department of  
Labor & Industries

TIRES is a project of the Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention (SHARP) program of the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries. TIRES is supported in part by CDC/NIOSH grant# U60 OH008487. For more information and free training resources visit

[KeepTruckingSafe.org](http://KeepTruckingSafe.org)

Summer 2017 SHARP Report No.: 90-178-2017