

SAFETY ALERT # 14.07

Title: Non-Secured Load Fatality



Truck after breaking hard and unsecured pipe travelled forward

LOCATION: Oudtshoorn – Western Cape

WHAT HAPPENED?

The truck, taking pipes to a pipeline project close by, had to suddenly apply the brakes to avoid an animal straying on to the road. The driver was killed instantly, his body found in two parts, the bottom half in his seat, the top half inside the pipe. The co-driver was impaled on a second pipe, forced through the windscreen and was found dead 17meters ahead of the truck.

This is a grim reminder of how a simple safety precaution if ignored can lead to such terrible accidents, often unbelievable. No other vehicle was involved!

CAUSES of EVENT:

- The driver/operator had not checked the load security after the first few kilometres driven.
- An animal coming onto the road caused the vehicle brake and to come to an abrupt stop.
- The vehicle flat-bed trailer was not fitted with a headboard.
- Securing mechanisms on the trailer were insufficient for the weight and momentum of the load. There were no forward or backward restraints.
- It is thought that the lack of tension straps was because the pipe journey was a short distance and the driver and co-driver “thought they would save time”.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

- Common loads should have a loading plan and drivers must ensure the load is fully secured before travelling. Best practice is to have a trip checker at the security gate of the pipeline supply depot or yard. This is a double check to ensure nothing has been missed.
- Stop after 5km – 10km into the journey to check securing mechanisms are still tight.
- Vehicle body should have a headboard capable of withstanding shock load.
- Risk Assessment and Safety Task Analysis to be conducted prior to execution of the task

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

- OHS Act Sec 8
- OHS Act Sec 13 (a)
- OHS Act Sec 14

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