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SAFETY ALERT

16-S-5

FROZEN WOOD RESIDUALS LOAD PINS TRUCK DRIVER

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BACKGROUND: On a cold, dark, snowy, early winter morning in the West, with temperatures in the mid 20s, a wood residual truck arrived at its destination to deliver a load.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The driver was fully trained in operational procedures at the receiving facility's truck dump by his employer. He had delivered to this facility on a daily basis for the previous six years.

UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITION: The load came into the receiving facility overweight. Since overweight trucks had previously caused damage to the truck dumper, the policy was to off-load some of the excess by either manually shoveling the product out of the truck or backing up and quickly stopping, in order to dislodge some product from the back of the trailer. The wood inside the trailer had frozen, due to freezing conditions and the presence of snow in the load.

The driver propped open the tailgate with the trailer handle and began to dislodge some of the frozen wood.



ACCIDENT: As the driver was shoveling the wood, approximately 3,000 pounds came loose from the load and buried the driver up to his chest in wood residuals. Because the driver was in an area not normally watched by others, he was pinned to the back of the truck for over five minutes. He managed to reach his hard hat and throw it out into a better lit area, where another arriving driver spotted it. Numerous people then arrived to help free the driver.

INJURY: The driver suffered a broken hip and contusions. He was taken by ambulance to the local hospital and subsequently transferred to a regional hospital. After further diagnosis, the driver had a hip replacement, and a metal rod was inserted into his femur. It is unknown if he will be able to resume work as a truck driver.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:

- Supplier mills should provide adequate and accessible scales to reduce the frequency of overloading.
- Drivers should be aware of "pinch points" when they are outside of the cab, and of unstable wood residuals, frozen or otherwise.
- Drivers should notify receiving facility personnel of overweight trucks, frozen loads, rather than addressing hazards unassisted.
- The receiving facility should develop safe procedures for dealing with overweight trucks

Reviewed by:
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Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.