

Safety Note #100

DUMP TRUCK SAFETY



Photograph Courtesy of Sierra Foothill REC

Information available from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration indicates 381 large trucks in California were involved in fatal crashes during 2004. In addition to crashes, dump truck drivers may be injured while boarding and debarking the vehicle and raising or lowering the dump box. Dump truck mechanics and other employees working on the ground in the vicinity of dump truck operations are also at risk for being injured in an accident involving a dump truck. The California Vehicle Code requires dump truck drivers to possess a valid Class C license for trucks less than 26,000 pounds gross vehicle weight (gvw) or Class B license for trucks 26,000 pounds gvw or greater. California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 3203 (7) requires employees to be trained on the equipment they use in the workplace.

Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the dump truck operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always thoroughly inspect the dump truck, including the head and tail lights, horn, rear view mirrors, tires, air brakes, and fluid levels.
- If any dump truck equipment fails the pre-use inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the truck from service by attaching a red tag that states "DO NOT USE." Complete red tag with appropriate information.

Operating Precautions

- When entering or exiting the cab of a dump truck, always use the hand hold and steps.
- Know the locations of obstacles such as boulders, overhead electric lines, fences, and low tree limbs in areas where loading, hauling, and dumping are to occur.
- Be aware of blind spots when backing a dump truck. Carefully adjust rear view mirrors to maximize your field of view. As necessary, use a "spotter" to back a dump truck.
- Always know where other workers are located in the loading, hauling, and dumping areas.
- Maintain awareness of the relationship between increasing braking distance as the dump load weight increases. Dump box loads should be evenly distributed to enhance vehicle stability.
- Always engage the dump-box lock bars before performing maintenance or other tasks under a raised dump box (see photograph at right).
- Recognize surface areas hazardous to dumping, such as uneven and sloping surfaces or poorly compacted fill. Dumping loads while located on hazardous surface areas may result in vehicle tip overs.
- Assure the length of travel is reasonably level and compacted before spreading material by dumping from a moving truck.
- Know whether the material being hauled is wet or damp and therefore, will have a tendency to stick in the dump box as it is raised.
- Prevent vehicle tip overs by deflating the air bags before raising the dump box.
- Always obey all traffic signs, signals, and speed limits.



Dump-Box Lock Bars

See Safety Note #75 for additional information about safe driving practices.