

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Fort Worth District  
Safety & Occupational Health Office**

## **Lessons Learned**

**ACCIDENT:** Dump truck fire

**Date:** 09 Aug 2002

**WHAT HAPPENED:** A truck with a 38-foot trailer dump bed was positioned to dump a load of road base material. The driver was directed by the spotter to raise the bed of the trailer; the spotter did not watch the bed being raised, the trailer became entangled in two 7700-volt power lines. The power lines caused the truck to arc, causing a fire. The fire melted the hydraulic lines causing the bed to free-fall. The power lines were pulled down when the bed free fell. The fire totally destroyed the vehicle, trailer and burnt approximately 20 acres of land. The driver and spotter were taken to a medical facility and later released without injuries.

**CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:**

- Failure to position truck with proper overhead clearance.
- No warning signage as to overhead power lines.
- Spotter was not paying attention to hazards around the work area.

**RESULTS:** Loss of equipment and property damage.

**LESSONS LEARNED:**

**Reference-EM 385-1-1 USACE Safety and Health Requirements Manual**

- **Develop an activity hazard analysis that addresses all hazards associated with the operation of a dump trailer in the vicinity of high power lines.**

01.A.09 Before beginning each activity involving a type of work presenting hazards not experienced in previous project operations or where a new work crew or subcontractor is to perform the work, activity hazard analysis shall be prepared by the contractors performing the work activity.

- **Provide signage to identify the hazard of overhead power lines in the vicinity of operations.**

08.A.01 Signs, tags, and labels shall be provided to give adequate warning and caution of hazards and instruction and directions to workers and the public.

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- **The spotter should remain focused on all aspects of the operations before, during and after to ensure safe operations.**
- **Position spotter so that the entire operation is visible and the spotter can relay commands to the vehicle operator.**

08.B.04 A signal person shall be provided when the point of operation (includes area of load travel and area immediately surrounding the load placement) is not in full view of the vehicle, machine, or equipment operator; when vehicles are backed more than 30 m (100 ft); when terrain is hazardous; or when two or more vehicles are backing in the same area.