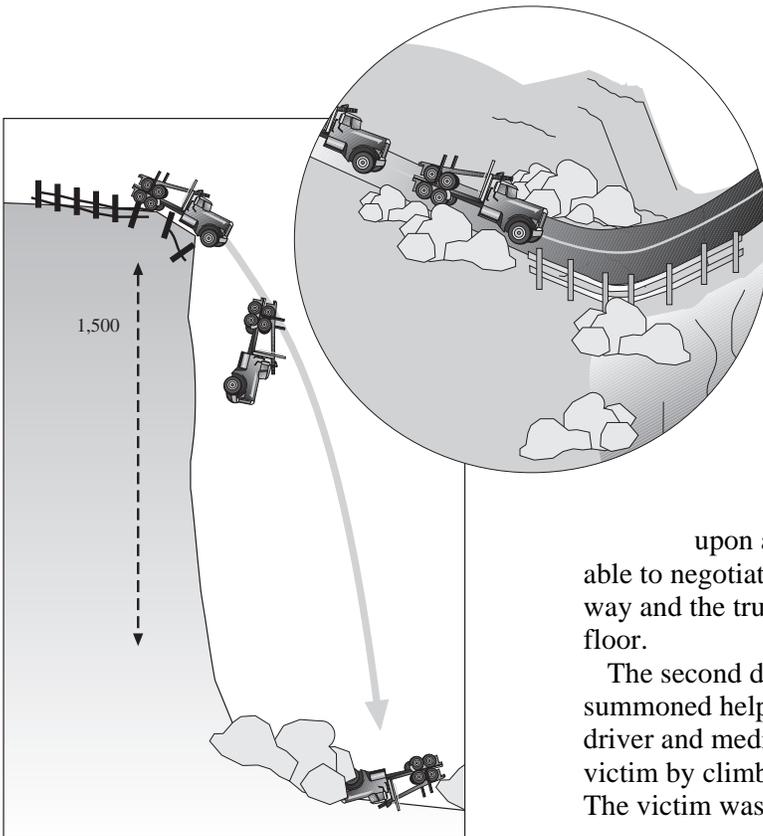


# SAFETY NOTES

Department of Consumer & Business Services  
Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Division  
Salem, OR 97301-3882

## Fatality Report

Accident type ..... Motor vehicle accident  
Industry ..... Logging  
Employee job title ..... Truck driver



### **Accident description**

The employer is in the business of loading and hauling raw logs to mills throughout Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. The day of the accident the victim had driven from Washington to a mill in Oregon and delivered a load of logs. He was returning to Washington, followed by another company truck, to pick up another load.

As the two trucks started down a grade, they came upon a 90-degree left-hand curve. The lead truck was unable to negotiate the curve and hit the guardrail. The guardrail gave way and the truck and victim plunged 1,500 feet to the canyon floor.

The second driver could not reach the victim from the road. He summoned help and called for emergency services. The second driver and medical personnel were able to reach the truck and victim by climbing through thick brush at the bottom of the grade. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

### **Investigation findings**

The brakes on the log truck involved in the accident were significantly out of adjustment and the brake lining was inadequate for safe stopping. Interviews revealed that on several occasions other drivers had reported mechanical problems for this vehicle, including heavy blue smoke coming from the brakes, the retarder (Jake) brake not functioning properly, and the brakes overheating. Approximately two weeks prior to the accident a driver told a mechanic that the brakes almost failed and smoked badly. The driver said the brakes were “spongy and hot” and the Jake brake had little or no compression. The mechanic told the driver he was waiting for parts.

The employer failed to keep vehicle and post-trip inspection reports. A post-trip inspection report is required to cover at minimum: service brakes, steering mechanism, parking (hand) brake, lighting devices and reflectors, tires and horn, windshield wipers, rearview mirrors, coupling devices, wheels and rims, and emergency equipment.

The employer was cited for failure to ensure that the defective vehicle brakes were repaired or replaced before the vehicle was operated and for failing to conduct a brake test before moving a load.

### **Applicable standards**

OAR 437-006-0485(2)

OAR 437-006-0485(1)