

Truck Liftgate Safety



There are many dangers when loading and unloading trucks. Today we're going to look specifically at the use of powered liftgates. Here is a short article from a recent incident. We don't know all the details of what happened, but the results are the same; a young man is dead.

Worker, 34, dies in incident at Coca-Cola plant

The Fayetteville Observer

May 9, 2017

By Monica Vendituoli Staff writer

A 34-year-old man died Monday morning in an incident at the Coca-Cola Bottling Plant.

The Cumberland County Sheriff's Office identified the worker as Joseph Kemper of Fayetteville.

At 10:36 a.m., Kemper was caught between a lift gate and a trailer, the N.C. Department of Labor said. He suffered a head injury and emergency personnel were not able to revive him.

Kemper was an employee at the plant, which is at 800 Tom Starling Road off U.S. 301 South.

The incident remains under investigation.

The release said fatality investigations typically take three to four months to complete and the department has up to six months to complete the investigation.

"We are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of our friend and co-worker, Joe Kemper," Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated said in a statement. "Our hearts are heavy, and our thoughts and prayers are with Joe's family and friends at this difficult time."

This recent article highlights just one of many injuries that occur each year in the operation of liftgates on the back of trucks. Many are life changing and this one was fatal.

Like any other piece of powered, automated equipment, we must learn to safely utilize liftgates. There are several different types of liftgates and each may have its own unique hazards. It is always important to read the specific manual for your model, however here are some general safety tips:

- Do not exceed rated load capacity of the liftgate.
- Do not allow any part of your body to be placed under, within, or around any portion of the moving liftgate or its mechanisms, or in a position that would trap them between the platform and the floor of truck body (or between platform and the ground) when liftgate is operating.
- Consider the safety and location of bystanders and location of nearby objects when operating the liftgate. Stand to one side of platform while operating the liftgate.
- Be certain that the area the liftgate will move through during operation is clear of all obstacles.
- Comply with all attached instruction decals and warning decals.
- Do not move vehicle unless liftgate is correctly stowed.
- Never drive a forklift on the liftgate platform.
- Correctly stow platform when not in use. Extended platforms could create a hazard for people and vehicles passing by.
- Secure top-heavy loads with strapping to prevent the item from tipping or rolling off.
- Use chocks to prevent loads from rolling off the gate.
- Never use the lift-gate for any purpose other than to lift or lower cargo from the truck. Never use lift-gates as a personnel lift.
- Keep hands and feet clear of all pinch points. There is a shear or pinch point exposure during lift-gate operations. Take note of where the lift-gate and the truck bed meet. Feet and hands are particularly vulnerable, during raising and lowering of the lift-gate.
- Make sure the platform is not slippery (e.g., oil, rain, ice or snow).
- Do not drive with the lift-gate down. It must be folded up and secured before the truck moves.