



Investigation Report

Worker Fatally Injured from Fall off a Low Level Ramp

June 24, 2016

Report No-F-OHS-105236-E11B0

May 2017

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This document reports Occupational Health and Safety's (OHS) investigation of a fatally injured worker falling from a low level ramp in June 2016. It begins with a short summary of what happened. The rest of the report covers this same information in greater detail.

Incident summary

A worker was getting change from the change machine located inside the wash bay, as part of the worker's regular duties. The manager was holding the door open, for the worker to get the change, when the worker suddenly lost balance and fell onto the worker's buttocks and then struck the worker's head on the floor. The worker was alert and conscious. The manager first called for assistance from a customer and then called Emergency Medical Services (EMS), who arrived a few minutes later. The injured worker was walking and talking and was assisted into the back of the ambulance. The worker was taken to the local hospital and then later transported to the Foothills Brain Trauma Centre in Calgary. The worker passed away the following day.

Background information

1622555 Alberta Ltd., operating as Olds Car & Truck Wash, is a privately owned company and has been in operation for ten years in Olds, Alberta. It consists of a six bay drive in car wash and two large truck bays. There is a front office with retail space for pop, chips, detail products and air fresheners. The car wash is a do it yourself system but also provides a detailing service by appointment.

The worker was a long term, part time employee of the Olds Car & Truck Wash; the worker's regular shift was on Fridays. The worker had been working at the facility for over six years. The general duties were to work the front desk while the manager was busy doing other tasks, such as detailing vehicles or recreational vehicles (RV's). Part of the regular duties included general sweeping/cleaning of the front office and getting bills changed to coins for when customers came in and requested them.

The manager had been employed at the Olds Car & Truck Wash since the fall of 2013. Part of the manager's duties included the pay schedule, work schedule and duties, as well as detailing vehicles and RV's.

Equipment and materials

Hamilton Manufacturing makes a variety of change and card dispensers (CCD). The (CCD) offers two machines in one cabinet. The CCD can be used as a normal change machine and for the use of automatic bays, self-serve bays, vacuums, and pet washes by selling customer value cards. Customers can select between new customer value card sales, checking balances, and recharging existing cards. (Figure 1)

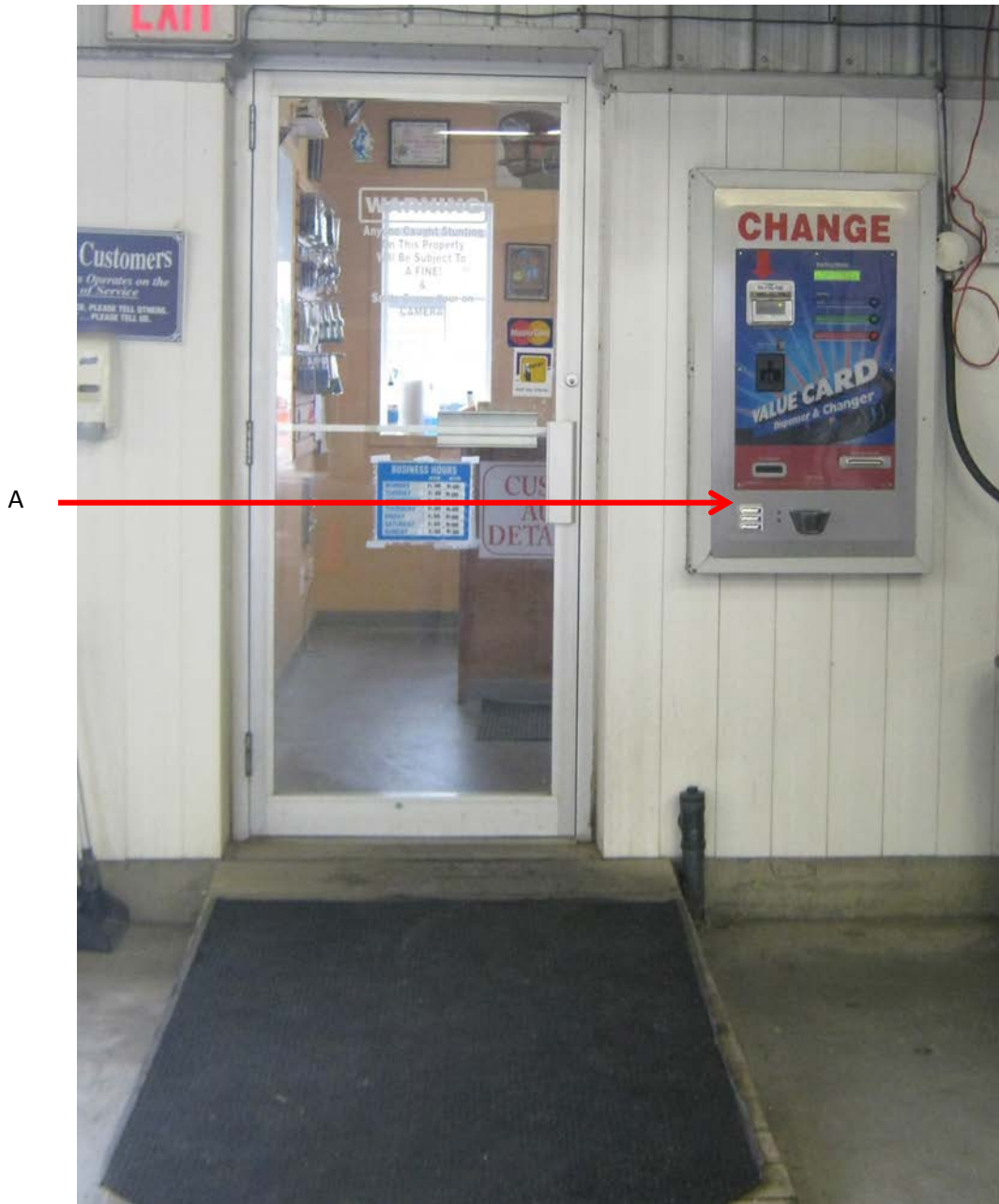


Figure 1. Wash bay interior and doorway to front counter area for customers.

A. The change machine the worker was using prior to the incident.

Sequence of events

The worker arrived at the worksite at the worker's scheduled time of work (10:00 a.m.). The manager and the worker discussed the various activities that were going on that day and the vehicle detailing jobs the manager was booked to do. The worker continued with the worker's regular duties of manning the store front desk and conducting light cleaning duties of the office area.

At mid-morning, the manager asked if the worker would make a lunch run and offered to pay for both meals. The worker declined the offer but voluntarily went to pick up the food. In the early afternoon, the manager discussed with the worker tasks to be completed for the next few hours. The manager mentioned the weather was expected to become rainy and miserable; therefore, the manager would be leaving at 3:00 p.m. The manager asked if the worker was comfortable with that until the next employee arrived at 3:30 p.m. The worker agreed.

A customer came into the store front office to get some change from the worker to wash the customer's motorcycle at approximately 2:45 p.m. After the worker gave the customer the change, the worker grabbed a couple of bills to make loose change from the machine inside the wash bay. (Figure 1)

As the worker was exiting the store front office, entering into the wash bay, the manager was coming toward the store front office at the same time. The manager held the door open while the worker proceeded to get change from the bills for the cash register. While standing facing the machine, the worker suddenly lost balance, twisted toward the right side and fell off the ramp onto the concrete floor. (Figure 2)



Figure 2. View of the door that enters into the wash bay from the front office. The ramp to access the wash area and the change machine location.

- A. The ramp the worker was standing on
- B. The area the worker landed

The worker first landed on the worker's buttocks then, with continued momentum backward, struck the back of the worker's head on the floor. The worker appeared momentarily stunned but maintained eye contact with the manager. The worker proceeded to try and get up, stating the worker was ok. The manager insisted the worker stay on the floor while the manager was seeking help and a clean towel.

The manager called 911. First aid was administered to the worker's head while a clean towel was held in place. EMS arrived and, shortly thereafter, the worker's spouse arrived. Both the spouse and the paramedics convinced the worker to go with EMS to Olds Hospital to receive stitches.

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The worker was later transported to the Red Deer Regional Hospital where it was established the worker needed more advanced medical attention. The worker was transported by ambulance to the Foothills Brain Trauma Centre in Calgary. The worker became unconscious at the Foothills Brain Trauma Centre. The worker was pronounced deceased the following day.

Completion

A review for enforcement action was completed on December 7, 2016, and it was determined that prosecution or an administrative penalty were not appropriate based on the circumstances surrounding this incident.

This file was closed on May 18, 2017.

Final Report

Signatures

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

May 23, 2017

Lead Investigator

Date

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

May 26, 2017

Manager

Date

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

June 14, 2017

Director

Date