

Investigation Report

Worker fatally injured after a slip and fall in a parking lot

November 5, 2018

Final Report

The contents of this report

This document reports Occupational Health and Safety's (OHS) investigation of a fatality that occurred in November 2018. 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 at a vehicle rental staging facility lot was in the process of entering a vehicle to move it to another facility when they slipped on ice in the lot and fell, striking their head. The worker was assisted into the main building and met with the unit manager; they then voluntarily left the worksite and drove home. The worker re-directed themselves to medical aid and was found unconscious in the parking lot of the local urgent care facility. The worker was admitted to the hospital where emergency surgery was completed. After surgery, the worker lapsed into a coma and was subsequently removed from life support the following week.

Background information

Avis Budget Group Inc. is the American parent company of Avis Car Rental, Budget Car Rental, Budget Truck Rental, Payless Car Rental, Apex Car Rentals, Maggiore Group and Zipcar. The company's headquarters are located in Parsippany, New Jersey, United States. As of 2011, Avis Budget is the leading general-use vehicle rental company in North America, Australia and New Zealand.

The worker (shuttle driver) involved in the incident was an employee of Avis Budget Group Inc. (Avis) and was based out of Edmonton. The worker was employed as a shuttle driver and had been in that role since July 2018. As a shuttle driver, the worker was responsible to move vehicles between the Avis airport lot and the Avis south Edmonton city lot, and vice versa.

Equipment and materials

No equipment was involved in the incident; however, the area where the incident occurred was an outdoor vehicle storage lot (Figure 1) subject to adverse weather conditions. At the time of the incident, there were patches of ice and snow on the ground that were revealed as vehicles were removed from the lot. The outside temperature was approximately -16°C with wind chill. The shuttle driver was noted by their supervisor post incident to be wearing traction aids as recommended by the employer.



Figure 1. The parking lot and ground conditions at the time that OHS arrived on site, November 8, 2018.

A. Approximate location where the shuttle driver slipped and fell.

Sequence of events

At approximately 8:00 a.m., Monday, November 5, 2018, the Avis district manager completed a daily operations meeting with the management team via conference call. One item addressed in the meeting was the storage lot conditions, and the snow and ice accumulations that changed as vehicles were moved. The manager stated that there had been several potential slip and fall incidents throughout the morning that required communication from management for increased worker awareness and reminders to use the provided traction aids.

At approximately 12:30 p.m., the shuttle driver was entering a vehicle when they slipped and fell. A nearby worker heard the impact. They approached the shuttle driver and saw them getting up off the ground. The shuttle driver stated that they had slipped and fallen when asked if they were okay by the worker who responded. Two other workers approached and assisted the shuttle driver in getting up.

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The shuttle driver was driven from the incident site to the main office building where they left the vehicle and made their way into the building unassisted.

The unit manager was informed of the incident and found the shuttle driver in the lunchroom, approached them and requested they to come to the main boardroom. The shuttle driver did this unassisted as well.

The unit manager interviewed the shuttle driver to obtain their side of the incident and noted that the shuttle driver was wearing traction aids. During the interview, the shuttle driver stated that they felt dizzy, but the unit manager later indicated that the shuttle driver could answer questions and wrote out their statement of the incident. The unit manager stated that they saw no obvious bumps or abrasions on the shuttle driver's head and that the shuttle driver was alert and coherent.

The unit manager and another manager made several recommendations during the interview that the shuttle driver be driven to the hospital to be checked out, all of which the shuttle driver refused.

During the interview, the shuttle driver stated that they felt it was best that they go home for the day and rest. The shuttle driver further stated the dizziness was going away, but that they felt a headache starting. The unit manager agreed and offered to have the shuttle driver driven home, which was also refused.

The unit manager was aware of the shuttle driver's home address and roughly how long it would take to drive there. The shuttle driver left the worksite at approximately 1:00 p.m. After the appropriate period of time, the unit manager had the dispatcher call the shuttle driver to follow up and ensure they got home okay. At least three separate telephone calls were made to the shuttle driver's home telephone number and cell phone with messages left each time.

During the time period of the shuttle driver travelling home, the unit manager continued to complete the necessary Workers' Compensation Board and internal documentation; they also informed the district manager of the incident and following actions.

When the shuttle driver could not be reached by phone, the employer called the shuttle driver's spouse and received an update from them. The spouse stated that they were contacted by the shuttle driver who said the dizziness was returning; the spouse directed the shuttle driver to go to the urgent care facility and would meet them there. The spouse arrived at the urgent care clinic and found the shuttle driver unconscious in their vehicle in the parking lot. The spouse summoned help, and the shuttle driver was admitted to the urgent care clinic immediately. The shuttle driver underwent emergency surgery.

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The employer attempted to remain in contact with the family and was updated that the shuttle driver was removed from life support at 5:30 a.m., November 16, 2018.

Completion

A review for enforcement action was completed on July 3, 2019, and it was determined that prosecution was not appropriate based on the circumstances surrounding this incident.

This investigation was closed on July 5, 2019.

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Signatures

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

July 22, 2019

Lead Investigator

Date

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

July 22, 2019

Manager

Date

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

August 1, 2019

Director

Date