

Crushed By - Inspection #1863700

A 46-year-old female was working as a roll-off dumpster truck driver. On the day of the event, she picked up a loaded dumpster and proceeded to the recycling center to unload it. She backed her truck to the building. The truck was on a slight incline where she allegedly initiated her parking brake. She exited the truck to open the dumpster gate and unloaded the material. After unloading the dumpster her gate would not lock in place. She asked the front-end loader to push on the gate to help with locking her gate in place. This is normal practice and is known by the employer. When the front-end loader pushed onto the gate, the truck started rolling forward and downhill. The victim ran after the truck and tried to reenter the vehicle to stop it. The truck hit a retaining wall, crushing the employee between the retaining wall and the truck.

Citation(s) as Originally Issued

A complete inspection was conducted at the accident scene. Some of the items cited may not directly relate to the fatality.

Violation 1 Item 1 Type of Violation: Serious

TCA 50-3-105(1): Each employer shall furnish to each of its employees conditions of employment and a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious injury or harm to its employees in that employees were exposed to physical harm, such as a struck-by hazard:

The employer failed to provide employees with safety instructions when offloading a roll off dumpster. Employees were exposed to a front-end loader lifting the gate on a roll-off dumpster causing the truck to roll forward.

This hazard was most recently documented on December 5, 2025, at the Putnam County Recycling Center located at 1846 South Jefferson Avenue, Cookeville, TN 38506, when an employee tried to stop an uncontrolled heavy-duty truck and was crushed between a retaining wall and the heavy-duty truck. The employee succumbed to her injuries.

Among other methods, one feasible and acceptable abatement method is to provide instructional training to all employees on the safe operation of each motor vehicle, as explained in the owner's manual operating instructions. This would include instructing drivers to:

- a. Always set the parking brake fully and make sure that the gearshift is securely latched in P (Park) or neutral (automatic transmission) or in 1st gear (manual transmission) as instructed in the owner's manual.
- b. Use choke blocks on the rear tires when parked on an incline.
- c. Never use a front-end loader to assist in latching a roll-off dumpster gate.

