WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT?

There seems to be several ways that a truck driver can get hurt – too many ways actually. There’s always the vehicle crash, and animal strikes, and cab fires, and assault at truck stops, and falling while getting in/out of the truck cab, and contact burns under the hood, and back strains from moving freight, and falling off/out of a trailer, and the list goes on and on and on. Let’s add another one to that list and review the circumstances surrounding the disabling injuries sustained by Warren and Nick. Their stories are not that exciting. In fact, they are almost embarrassing. Warren got hurt using a shovel (scoop) and Nick got hurt using a broom. Hardly an injury you would want to discuss with your buddies.

Shovels and brooms appear to be harmless tools. They don’t have any moving parts. They are not powered by electricity or gas. So how did Warren and Nick get hurt and who would have thought that a truck driver could get hurt using these simple tools?

Warren pulls a dump trailer and his freight is usually rip rap or gravel. There has never been a problem with the rip rap sticking to the floor of the trailer. All of it always dumps cleanly and that makes Warren happy. On the other hand, sometimes the gravel loads will stick to the bottom of his trailer, especially near the front in the corners. This irritates Warren because he is responsible for cleaning out his trailer and he must use a shovel (scoop) to accomplish the task. Just two weeks ago on one cold February day Warren faced this challenge. He grabbed the scoop and threw it in the trailer. After he climbed into the trailer he began to clean out the trailer, but had to stop after a few minutes because his back hurt and he could not stand up straight.

Nick’s story was just a little bit different. His trailer was a dry van, but he also was responsible for sweeping it out prior to dropping it at a shipper’s dock. He was motivated that day to accomplish all tasks and see if he could make it back to dispatch early. Unfortunately, his motivation caused him to sweep out his trailer too fast and too hard. About half way through the task he felt something pull on his left side and he was in so much pain he could barely get out of the trailer, much less finish sweeping it out.

REAL LIFE LESSON

This one is easy – just remember the two P’s. Always prepare yourself for the task. If it involves physical activity then warm up and loosen up prior to commencing the work. Next, remember to always pace yourself. Your body has an ideal speed at which it will function. Too fast and you will injure yourself. Too slow and your supervisor will yell at you!