

Event Type: Fall festival

Incident: Fall from height

Narrative

On Saturday, October 18, 2008, a fall festival was held in DeFuniak Springs, FL. It was around 8:00 pm. The festival offered tractor pulled hayrides to people of all ages. The tractor was pulling a flatbed trailer of bundled hay. The hay was bundled with twine in 2 places lengthwise. The hay was stacked in a manner that provided tiered seating. It was stacked 3 high in the center of the trailer. Each trailer could provide seating for 20. There were a total of 6 tractors providing rides on 6 separate trailers. The festival and hayride was in its second week of operation. Each tractor trailer was following an established route around the perimeter of a pumpkin patch. The tractor trailers would leave in groups of 2.

A young woman was on the trailer of the lead tractor. They had completed half of the established route. As the ride continued the young woman felt like she was slipping off of her seat. She soon realized that the hay bundle she was seated on was coming undone. She tried to adjust herself into a more stable position but failed. The tractor hit a bump and she slipped off the back end of the tractor trailer. The area was dimly lit and the tractor trailer did not have any lights on the rear of the vehicle. The tractor behind her had a headlight out and water trapped in the second light. The screams from friends and family were silenced by the sound of the tractor trailers engines. The young girl was ran over by the oncoming tractor and killed on the scene.

Problem statements

- Do you think the operator provided adequate staffing to prevent an incident such as this? Why or why not?
- What could they have done differently with respect to the tractor trailer ride that could have prevented this?
- What could be done to improve communication?
- What should they have been inspecting? Did they have an effective inspection program? Why or why not?
- Who should have performed the inspection(s)? What should you do with the inspection findings? How long should you keep them?
- Should you document this incident? How do you document it? How long do you keep the records?
- Should this operation be continued? Why or why not?
- Should the authorities be contacted? Which ones and why? What is the time frame?
- What should be done for the family of the deceased? What could be the ramifications of your actions?
- What should be done for the employees at the event?