

Kentucky Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program

Incident Number: 13KY039

Release Date: November 20, 2013

Subject: Truck Driver Dies When Tractor-Trailer Leaves The Road And Plunges Into A Creek-Bed

Summary:

In the early morning hours of a fall day, exact time unknown and the length of time driving unknown, a 28-year-old male truck driver was driving north on an interstate transporting 30,000 lbs. of blue plastic injection molding pellets. The truck driver exited the highway behind a guardrail and traveled 1,320 feet, striking a wire fence and several trees before plummeting into a creek bed, shearing the cab open. At 10:27 a.m., a citizen called in to the fire department to report a mysterious blue substance observed in the creek a couple of miles down from the accident. The fire department arrived on scene, followed the creek and found the semi in the creek. The driver was extricated by mechanical means by the fire department and declared dead at the scene by the coroner's office.

To prevent future occurrences of similar incidents, the following recommendations have been made:

Recommendation No. 1: Semi tractor-trailer drivers should routinely receive refresher training to recognize signs of fatigue and drowsiness and when to seek appropriate rest periods.

Recommendation No. 2: Never turn off your airbags while driving a tractor-trailer.

Recommendation No. 3: Motor carriers need to monitor their drivers' driving records for key violations that indicate a future crash is likely.

Recommendation No. 4: Motor carriers should consider regular online safety training that allows drivers the flexibility to complete course(s) at times convenient to their busy schedules.