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HAZARDS RELATED TO  
DUMP TRUCK BEDS

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OFFERS TIPS ON EXTENSION  
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## OSHA Issues Bulletin on Dump Truck Bed Hazards

OSHA has recently issued a "Safety and Health Information Bulletin" to alert employers and employees who service or maintain dump trucks or haulage trucks about the hazards of falling dump truck beds. In reviewing its accident data, OSHA identified that nearly all accidents involving the unanticipated release or movement of an elevated truck bed result in fatalities.

In the landscaping industry, many companies perform their own equipment and vehicle maintenance. Performing maintenance work or troubleshooting activities underneath the dump body of a dump truck presents special hazards to maintenance or servicing personnel. Work performed under a raised bed includes repairs to air or hydraulic lines, repair and welding frames, electrical wires and release cables, power take-off shafts, hydraulic pumps, fuel pumps, and routine greasing.

Causes for the sudden movement of the dump truck beds include the following:

- Inadvertent control operation
- Inadvertently pulling a release cable
- Hydraulic failure
- Premature reconnecting of an air line
- Failure of the blocking device

It's critical that employers provide stringent Lockout/Tagout procedures and training for employees who work under the dump body and



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to isolate and sufficiently and safely block the dump bed prior to doing the assigned work.

### Body props can fail

Dump trucks are typically sold with "body props," which are devices designed to hold the bed up during maintenance. Unfortunately, sometimes body props are not used or are used improperly. Even when props are used, they may fail. Body props are commonly misused when raised upright without having the weight of the bed supported or braced. They are subject to rust and damage and need to be properly maintained. If the props provided by the truck body manufacturer do not provide sufficient accessible space to perform necessary maintenance, employees may neglect to use them or use them improperly.

Mechanics need to access the rear of the truck where damage often occurs to air or hydraulic hoses, electrical lines, control cables, and hydraulic motors. To access these areas, the truck body must be moved to a higher position than that which may be supported by the manufacturer's prop. In these instances, employers need to provide additional bracing or support. However, if not able to support the

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### Dump truck bed - continued from page 1

weight of the dump body, these methods are ineffective and can lead to serious accidents. Employers must ensure that before employees make inspections, adjustments or repairs under dump truck bodies, strong, heavy, positive supports are used to keep the dump bed from inadvertently lowering.

OSHA's bulletin urges employers whose employees service or maintain dump trucks to implement an effective Lockout/Tagout Program in general industry settings (29 CFR 1910.147) or to implement the below referenced construction standards in construction settings to prevent unintended releases or movement of the truck beds that can result in an employee's death or serious injury.

- OSHA's construction standard, [29 CFR 1926.600\(a\)\(3\)\(i\)](#), requires that: "heavy machinery, equipment, or parts thereof which are suspended or held aloft... shall be substantially blocked or

cribbed to prevent falling or shifting before employees are permitted to work under or between them."

- [29 CFR 1926.601\(b\)\(10\)](#) also requires that in construction settings, trucks with dump bodies shall be equipped with positive means of support, permanently attached, and capable of being locked in position to prevent accidental lowering of the body while maintenance or inspection work is being done.

### One employer develops prototype brace

Most employers would choose to go to the truck manufacturer for adequate braces. If not, you assume the responsibility for designing and testing the devices you plan to use. Because of the risk of injury or death to employees working between the frame and dump box of a truck, one employer developed braces to secure the dump box while employees serviced various areas that were not reachable using the manufacturer's prop. Three tests were conducted on one prototype brace at the University of Wisconsin - Madison using a 1-million pound test machine. Loads were applied to the brackets at the rate of 10,000/lbs per minute. The braces successfully passed the test.

In addition to preplanning your Lockout/Tagout program for your dump trucks, you must train your employees on your plan. This training is required under both general industry and construction standards. For more information related to this topic, visit [www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib091806.html](http://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib091806.html).

Visit [www.technetrainonline.com](http://www.technetrainonline.com) for a full line of training programs and reference manuals with detailed information on these and other OSHA Compliance requirements for the landscape industry, or contact *Technetrain, Inc.* at (800) 852-8314. Members may order some of these products directly from ANLA at a discounted price.



Figure 1 shows a wooden block makeshift body prop. Make-shift devices are not designed to safely support the elevated dump body.



Figure 2 shows an example of the prototype truck bed brace brackets that were developed by an employer and can be used universally on any brand of dump box.



Figure 3 shows the top channel of the truck bed brace bracket. These braces also have a handle that allows an employee to place the brace under the dump box without creating an additional hazard.

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# Get Plugged Into Safety With Extension Cords

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), it is estimated that each year about 4,000 injuries associated with electrical extension cords are treated in hospital emergency rooms and about half those injuries involve fractures, lacerations, contusions or sprains from people tripping and falling over extension cords. The CPSC also estimates that the misuse of extension cords causes approximately 3,300 fires each year resulting in 50 deaths and 270 injuries.

Using the wrong type of extension cord and using extension cords improperly causes a variety of hazards.

When selecting extension cords, use only those with three wires that are approved by Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Any two-wire (lamp-light type) extension cords in your facility should be removed from service and discarded. Extension cords used in the horticultural industry should be rated as "heavy duty" or "extra heavy duty" and must be continuous length. Cords classified as SO, ST and SJ meet this requirement. In addition, extension cords must be of sufficient current-carrying capacity to power the devices used with it. Long extension cords require increased conductor size to compensate for voltage drop. A general rule of thumb is one gauge heavier for every 100 feet of additional cord length. Minimum conductor size should be #16AWG.

## Treat cords with care

Users can control many of the hazards associated with extension cords. No extension cord can withstand rough usage. Avoid kinking, knotting, cutting, crushing

or bending the cord, which can break the insulation and result in a short circuit, electrical shock or fire. An extension cord should not be used continuously for 90 days; instead a licensed electrician should be hired to install the necessary electrical outlets needed.

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If a extension cords are being used around construction sites (such as erecting new greenhouses or building a new storage shed), in damp areas, or in any area where a person may be in direct contact with a solidly grounded conductive object, the extension cord must be protected with a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). Extension cords should not be used for heat-producing appliances, such as coffee pots, toaster ovens, microwaves and space heaters.

The load from these devices often approaches the circuit capacity, and the added cord length increases the chance of overheating. In addition, the appliance cord to extension cord connection is subject to wear and tear, which can cause localized heating and a subsequent fire. Avoiding a shock also requires that electrical cords be in good condition—do not use if they are kinked, cracked, punctured or frayed. When disconnecting the extension cord from the appliance, jerking the wire cord can cause serious damage. Disconnect by gripping the plug, not pulling on the wire cord. It is important to routinely inspect cords prior to each new use.



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## Watch for tripping hazards

Trips and falls may not always be as life-threatening as electric shocks, but they can have serious effects. Trips and falls are probably the most common hazards

associated with extension cords because they are often mistakenly placed in areas with heavy foot traffic. Avoid letting extension cords cross aiseways or other walkways where patrons and employees can trip over them. Sometimes the tripping hazard can be eliminated by hanging the cord overhead as long as there is ample clearance. (Be sure any fasteners used won't damage the cord.) If a cord must be laid on the floor, it should be placed inside a UL-listed cord protector to prevent it from being damaged.

Heed the following quick tips to avoid extension cord hazards:

- Look for the UL label on the extension cords you purchase.
- Store all extension cords inside when not in use.
- Unplug extension cords when not in use.
- Some cords with more than one outlet have covers for the unused openings. Use

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them, as they prevent debris and moisture from entering the unused outlets.

- Do not use extension cords that are cut or damaged.

- As a safety feature, extension cords and most appliances have polarized plugs (one blade wider than the other). These special plugs are designed to prevent electrical shock by properly aligning the circuit. If a plug does not fit, have a qualified electrician install a new outlet.

- Never file or cut the plug blades or grounding pin of an extension cord or appliance to plug it into an ungrounded outlet.

- Keep cords out of work areas. If this situation is unavoidable, secure the cord to the floor with a UL-listed cord protector.

- If using an extension cord in a damp area, make sure it is connected to a ground-fault circuit interrupter.

- Do not allow extension cords to coil on the floor, as this presents a trip/fall hazard.

- Only use heavy-duty extension cords, and eliminate usage of all lamp-light type cords.

Implementing proper extension cord use is not difficult, complicated or time-consuming and will help prevent possible hazards. Following these guidelines may also help you and your business avoid becoming a U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission statistic!

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insurance products, contact  
Hortica Insurance at  
800-851-7740 or log on to  
[www.hortica-insurance.com](http://www.hortica-insurance.com).

## New Safety Tool for Users of Zero-Turn Mowers

Mower safety has always been a concern for landscape companies and lawn maintenance firms. In recent years, companies have adopted new technology, such as zero-turn mowers. These mowers, while more efficient, can also be more dangerous. Now there's a new tool to make mowing safer.

The National Safety Council, in partnership with The TORO Company and Exmark, is offering a limited quantity of zero-turn commercial mower safety training kits. *The Commercial Equipment Operators' (CEO) Safety Training Program* aims to reduce injuries associated with unsafe operating conditions, such as wet mowing conditions, slopes, excess speed and tight mowing areas.

The program is designed as a tailgate-training package, and all instructor and student materials are presented in English and Spanish. Its oversized, self-standing format makes it easy to read in the field. It's also manufactured with durable materials that can withstand outdoor use. For more details, contact the Council at (800) 621-7619, or log onto <https://secure.nsc.org/onlinecart/product.cfm?id=1465>.

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