

# Worker Struck by Winch Cable

Incident Date: January 3, 2014 / Location: Near MacKay, AB / Industry: Well Servicing



**AI Teaching Illustration.** Shows exposure beside a winch line and partly loaded tank. Positions and rigging details are schematic; the cable did not break.

## What Happened

A rig manager and derrickhand were loading a rig tank with a truck-mounted winch. The tank's front rested on the rear deck while its back remained on the ground. A new cable was not spooling neatly, so they stopped and paid out slack to re-wrap it.

The rig manager climbed onto the snowy deck and guided the cable by hand while the derrickhand operated the winch. After slipping, the manager stood up while still pulling the line. The tank then slipped off the deck, snapping the cable taut against it. The cable struck the manager's leg. Despite emergency transport and hospital care, the worker died.

## Why This Became Fatal

**The partly supported tank could move and suddenly load the cable.** Hand-guiding the line placed the worker in its movement path. The cold, snow-covered metal deck also caused a slip. The cable did not break: the falling tank pulled it tight with fatal force.

**NEVER FORGET.**

LET THEIR STORY PREVENT RECURRENCE.

## What Safe Looks Like

Secure the load and control energy before correcting a spooling problem.



### 1 Make the Load Stable

Lower or secure the load by an approved method before repair.

### 2 Isolate Before Contact

Stop, isolate and verify stored energy is controlled.

### 3 Use the Approved Method

Never hand-guide a moving line. Use the winch maker's procedure and keep people outside cable and load paths.

**AI Teaching Illustration.** Load grounded and work paused; isolation detail is conceptual. **LSR links:** Energy Isolation; Line of Fire.

## Investigation Outcome

Alberta Justice conducted a preliminary screening on February 26, 2014. On **December 19, 2014, Justice determined that the case did not support charges** under OHS legislation. The published investigation records no employer or supervisor conviction. Its final report was signed in January 2016.

## Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 What could shift and suddenly tighten a slack cable or sling in our work?
- 2 How would we make the load stable before correcting a spooling problem?
- 3 Can anyone reach or enter a moving line's path during our current method?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse the task if the load or stored energy could not be controlled?

### SAFETY COMES FIRST.

**Your Right to Refuse – Alberta.** You may refuse work you reasonably believe presents an undue hazard: a serious and immediate threat. Promptly report the refusal and reasons to your employer or supervisor. They must investigate. Contact Alberta OHS if unresolved. Take reasonable care not to endanger others. You are protected from reprisal.

**Sources:** [Alberta OHS investigation F- OHS-055799-97003](#), pp. 2-8; summary completed January 2016. [Alberta refusal guidance](#). Prepared October 19, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.

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