Attitude and Safety Fatality Report



My name is Mélanie, and I’m from Dieppe, NB. In 2001, on the eve of my 22nd birthday, I was involved in a serious accident at work.

My job, a part-time position, consisted of driving mentally challenged adults to social activities on Monday nights, using a 15-passenger van.

February 12th was a particularly cold night. When it was time to bring the participants back home, the other driver and I went to warm up the vans. The two vehicles were parked one in front of the other, about two metres apart.

Next to one I noticed a patch of ice near the door where the participants would get in. Thinking of their safety, I suggested the other driver back the van away from the ice. I went in between the two vehicles to direct her.

Suddenly I saw the van rushing towards me. I didn’t have time to jump out of the way. I was pinned. The bumper crushed my upper legs, breaking both femurs.

I started yelling “Move the van!” banging on the back window. I still remember the yell. I didn’t know I could scream like that.

The van moved, and I looked down at my legs. They were deformed in the shape of an arch. I panicked and threw myself on the ground; scared they would snap in two.

As I lay on the frozen ground waiting for the ambulance, my co-workers and the mentally challenged adults covered me with their jackets to keep me warm.

The femur is the biggest bone in the body. Usually, a person loses consciousness when it breaks. Both of mine were broken, and I wish I had lost consciousness. Instead I dug my fingers into the ground, thinking, “Will I be able to walk again?”

At the hospital, I had a 6-hour operation. Metal rods were put inside my femurs. Screws were put in both knees and hips. The incisions, some 20 centimeters long, were stapled closed.