

By LARRY PHILLIPS

• Leader & Times

A Meade man was hospitalized after slamming into the side of a semi Monday afternoon six miles east of Liberal.

Erasmus Vergara, 54, Meade, was driving his 2001 Oldsmobile westbound on U.S. Highway 54 and travelling behind a westbound semi. According to a Kansas Highway Patrol report, Vergara was following the 2000 Freightliner too closely.

When the truck's driver, Matthew R. James, 37, Hugoton, slowed to turn north on Road O at 4:59 p.m., Vergara swerved onto the shoulder in an attempt to avoid a collision and crashed into the side of the semi.

Vergara was transported to Southwest Medical Center for treatment of his injuries. James was not injured in the crash.

Both men were wearing their seat belts, according to the report.