

SAFETY ALERT



OPERATOR CRUSHED BY OVERTURNED FORKLIFT

INCIDENT

A forklift driver was seriously injured, suffering a fractured pelvis after his forklift overturned and crushed him.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The driver was returning to the warehouse on his unloaded forklift and turned right on a sloping gravel surface. The right side of the machine lifted and travelled on its front and rear left hand wheels. The driver was not wearing the seat belt fitted to the machine and attempted to jump left to get clear. He was caught by the protective bar of the rollover cage which landed on his left hip and pinned him to the ground.

INVESTIGATION

Matters found to be deficient were:

- No standard operating procedures were available.
- No formal training, refresher or emergency training had been given.
- The vehicle appears to have been travelling too fast for the conditions; no speed signs were installed.
- The right hand turn was too tight.
- The driver was not restrained by a seat belt.
- The work area for forklift travel was not completely sealed or level.

It has been estimated that 25% of forklift accidents are “tip overs”.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- A risk assessment is conducted to identify all potential hazards associated with forklift operations.
- Areas and roadways where forklifts travel should be suitable for the specific equipment.
- Standard Operating Procedures and Job Safety Analysis should be available for forklift operators.
- Travel rules and routes should be established and sign posted.
- Competency of operators should be assessed.
- Heed safety advice and information provided by the supplier/manufacturer.
- Seat belts that comply with the forklift manufacturer's specifications should be worn.
- Acquire relevant training material/information and warning signage. These may be sourced from the manufacturer, service agent or WorkCover Authority.

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Note:

Recent legislation, namely Section 4A (2) of the Mines Inspection Act, 1901 includes in the definition of "mine" any place or machinery used in connection with exploration or extraction of metals or minerals. Previously, forklift accidents may not have shown up significantly as statistics in the Department's past accidents. The above accident should flag the unstable characteristics of these machines.

A forklift agent explained that newer machines have superior safety features which help prevent rollover incidents similar to the above.

SIGNED OFF

R Regan
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SAFETY OPERATIONS



A forklift driver was seriously injured when this forklift overturned. His pelvis was fractured, crushed by the forklift.