

Working with forklifts

The purpose of this alert is to remind forklift users of the inherent dangers of using a forklift.

Background

WorkCover recently responded to two incidents where, in each incident, a worker was injured while a load was being shifted nearby with a forklift.

In the first incident, a worker received crush injuries when chains used to suspend the load slipped off the tines, causing the load to fall.

In the second incident, while attempting to place a heavy concrete pit onto a rack with a forklift, the pit toppled onto a worker.

Contributing factors

Investigations are continuing. However, in both incidents, the procedures for lifting, transporting and lowering the load did not ensure the stability of the load at all times. Also, other workers near the forklift were not safely positioned.

Action required

Employers and workers who operate forklifts should note the following:

- s Employers must ensure that plant is safe when properly used. They also must develop and implement safe systems of work and ensure that employees are provided with the information, instruction, training and supervision that's required to ensure their health and safety at work.
- s Forklift operators must be trained and hold a relevant license. They also must be competent at operating the fork lift in the environments in which they are required to work.
- s Before lifting a load, the weight, size, shape and composition of a load should be considered, along with the terrain that the forklift will be travelling over. Loads must only be lifted, carried and stored in a manner that ensures stability at all times.
- s When carrying loads, avoid sudden or heavy braking that could cause the load to slide forwards.
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