Forklift fatality

20 December 2019

Incident overview

Two maintenance workers were undertaking electrical work using a forklift and workbox at a manufacturing site in Barooga in the Riverina region. The forklift inadvertently lifted the workbox, crushing one worker between the workbox and the underside of the roof. The worker sustained fatal head injuries.

The investigation

- SafeWork NSW inspectors responded to the incident.
- SafeWork NSW commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident.

Loading dock where work was being done. An electrician was in the raised workbox near the underside of the roof at time of incident.
Safety information

Businesses are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety in accordance with the provisions of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

Businesses must consider ‘reasonably practicable’ control measures when using plant not specifically designed to lift people, such as forklifts fitted with workboxes. Make sure:

- the workbox is fitted with overhead protection if there is a risk of collision
- the forklift driver holds a current, valid licence
- the forklift data plate includes the workbox model number
- the workbox is securely attached to the forklift, according to manufacturer’s instructions
- workers are trained to use the workbox safely and follow emergency procedures, so occupants can be rescued if necessary
- the forklift is on a hard, flat, level surface, with the park brake applied, controls in neutral and the mast is vertical
- the path is clear of overhead obstructions – do a test lift with an empty workbox
- the forklift driver stays at the controls when someone is in the workbox
- workers wear a safety harness in the workbox, if there is a risk of falling from a height.

Further information

- Forklift Safety Advice
- Industrial lift trucks guidance material
- Clause 219 – Plant that lifts or suspends loads
- Clause 220 – Plant not specifically designed to lift or suspend a person
- AS 2359.2-2013 Powered industrial trucks - Operations
- AS 2359.1:2019 Powered industrial trucks – General requirements