

19/01/2022

Forklift truck crush fatality

2 December 2021

A 61-year-old forklift truck operator sustained fatal injuries while moving cable drums. Prior to moving one of the cable drums, the operator alighted the forklift to retrieve a work document which was placed on the cable drum. The forklift moved forward causing the operator to be pinned between the load guard and the cable drum.



Forklift involved in the incident

Safety information

Every year forklifts cause workplace deaths and injuries resulting in substantial financial and human costs for workers, industry, and the community. The three main reasons workers are killed or seriously injured in forklift incidents are:

1. being hit or crushed by a forklift
2. being hit or crushed by a load that the forklift is moving
3. being crushed in a forklift tip-over

Consider 'reasonably practicable' control measures to manage the risks associated with operating forklifts.

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing and the findings are not yet confirmed. SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation in response to the incident to determine its cause and circumstances. No conclusions should be drawn from the information in this publication about the cause of the incident or the culpability of any party.



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Businesses must:

- develop and implement a safe system of work
- ensure all workers operating a forklift have the appropriate high risk work licence and have received training on the type of forklift they are using
- ensure the manufacturer's instruction manual is made available to operators.

Before operating a forklift, you:

- must hold a current high-risk work licence (class LF)
- must have access to the manufacturer's instructions to ensure the forklift is operated safely
- must be trained on the specific type of forklift so that you are familiar with the operating controls and understand any limitations
- should always conduct pre-start and operational safety checks to confirm the forklift is safe to operate.

When operating a forklift:

- always follow the forklift manufacturer's instructions, site safety rules, traffic management plan and safety instructions from your employer
- assess the load to determine if the forklift configuration is designed to lift the load or whether a lifting attachment is better suited to maintain control of the load
- if you need to alight from the forklift, lower the fork arms to ground level, apply the parking brake, and ensure the drive controls are in neutral
- if left unattended, in addition to the above point, the forklift should be turned off and the ignition key removed, or the ignition control locked off to stop unauthorised use.

Practical tips to help keep workers safe:

Set up the workplace so that forklifts and people are separated, such as using barriers or guardrails. If separation is not possible:

- clearly mark walkways and safe work zones, and make sure your workers stick to them
- ensure the forklift is fitted with warning devices to warn people of its movement
- make sure forklift operators only lift loads that are stable and secured on a pallet otherwise use an approved attachment if it is safer to do so
- make sure your forklift operators wear a seat belt (if fitted)
- make sure your workers and visitors, including delivery drivers, stick to your traffic management plan and site safety rules
- talk to all your workers, including operators and those who work near forklifts about how to work safely around forklifts.

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More information

- [Managing the risks of plant in the workplace](#) - Code of practice
- [Forklift safety information](#) – SafeWork NSW
- [Traffic management guide – warehousing](#) Safe Work Australia
- [General guide for industrial lift trucks](#) – Safe Work Australia

View the latest incident information releases at safework.nsw.gov.au

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