

Safety and health alert

54/99 Trained fork-lift operator injured

Incident

A fork-lift operator at a foundry received a compound fracture to the lower right leg during October 1999. The properly trained and assessed operator left a load of cast pipes on the raised tynes of his fork-lift and stood in front of the fork-lift with his back to the tynes. The pipes rolled off the tynes and struck him in the back of the leg.

Factors

1. The operator loaded his fork-lift contrary to his instruction and training and contrary to Australian Standard AS 2359.2.
2. The operator left the fork-lift with the engine running and with a load on its raised tynes, contrary to AS 2359.2.
3. The operator stood in front of the raised tynes with his back to the fork-lift.
4. The load of pipes was not secured as required by legislation, and the mast of the fork-lift was not tilted back to prevent the load rolling off.

Recommendations

1. Operators must ensure that loads on fork-lifts are secured particularly pipes and other objects that move easily.
2. Operators must not leave a fork-lift until they shut down the engine and lower the tynes to the ground.
3. Operators must prevent people from standing under or close to a raised load. People must be far enough away so falling loads will not injure them.
4. Fork-lift operators must ensure fork-lift operations comply with AS 2359.2 at all times. This is a legal requirement under Occupational Safety and Health Regulation 4.55.
5. Employers must provide supervision and control measures so that fork-lift operations in workplaces do not expose people to hazards.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

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