

# Safety and health alert

## 29/00 Modified forklift alarms

### WorkSafe Western Australia

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#### Incident

In June at a motor vehicle wrecking yard a WorkSafe Western Australia inspector found operations being carried out using a forklift that had been modified to the extent that it placed both the operator and persons within the vicinity of the forklift operations at risk of serious injury. The modified forklift was being used to lift motor vehicles off trucks.

Prohibition notices were issued to the owner.

#### Factors

1. The forklift load chart provided to indicate the safe lifting capacity of the forklift was illegible and in any event did not reflect the modified safe lifting capacity of the forklift when the 'slippers' were attached to the fork arms.
2. The forklift attachments ('slippers' that measured 2.93 metres in length) had not been assessed by a competent person as required by legislation.
3. 'Slippers' used to extend fork arms must not be more than a half longer than the original fork arms. In this case, this restriction was grossly exceeded.
4. The forklift was only able to be used outside the manufacturer's specifications because of the addition of metal weights to the counterweight. Because of its high location the additional weight added to the counterweight raised the centre of gravity of the machine and in the process adversely affected the "**lateral stability**" of the forklift during operation.

#### Recommendations

1. Regulation 4.37(1)(a) of the *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996* states: "An employer must ensure that plant at a workplace is used only for the purpose for which it was designed, unless the employer has determined, and a competent person has assessed that a proposed change in use does not increase the risk of injury or harm occurring." A competent person must assess forklift attachments to determine that the attachments comply with the requirements of the manufacturer in all respects, particularly forklift stability.
2. Forklifts must be operated in accordance with Australian Standard 2359.2 and the manufacturer's requirements.
3. Load charts must be legible and indicate the safe lifting capacity of both the forklift and any lifting attachments used with it. In respect of lifting attachments, the load chart must show the associated load centre and safe lifting capacity of each attachment.

#### Further Information

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

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Government of **Western Australia**  
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