

Safety and health alert

08/04 Truck driver injured by falling hay bale

Incident

A truck driver was severely injured when a 750kg bale of hay fell on him when his truck was being unloaded.

The truck driver had parked the truck and removed the straps used to hold the load. He carried the straps to the front of the cab to wind them up and store them in the truck's toolbox. In the meantime, a loader operator had started to unload the bales of hay, two at a time, from the truck.

Instead of waiting for the truck to be completely unloaded, the truck driver decided to store the straps in the toolbox. This was situated under the tray at the rear of the truck and on the opposite side to the loader unloading the bales.

The loader operator noticed the truck driver moving down the other side of the truck but continued to unload the bales. As the loader operator lifted two of the bales on the forks, the top bale fell off, rolled across the truck's tray and struck the truck driver as the bale fell to the ground.

Factors

- A pedestrian was in the vicinity of the truck during unloading.
- Unloading of the truck continued after the loader operator saw the pedestrian in the vicinity of the truck.
- The company did not have a traffic management system in place for the unloading/loading of trucks.

Recommendations

- Establish an exclusion zone around the area where trucks are being unloaded/loaded by a forklift or other mobile plant.
- Supply adequate information, instruction or training of persons involved in unloading/loading of trucks.
- Employers and other persons in control of a workplace must ensure that the movement of vehicles is managed so as to minimize the risk of injury to pedestrians.

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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