

Safety and health alert

13/04 Truck driver injured by falling earthmoving tyres

Incident

An integrated Tool Carrier fitted with tynes and being operated as a forklift was unloading stacks of earthmoving tyres, two and three high from a drop-deck semi-trailer. The stacked tyres each weighing 475 kg, were sitting directly on the trailer and were not secured to each other.

The tyres were unloaded one stack at a time by sliding the tynes under each stack and lifting them clear of the trailer. The carrier driver then reversed and travelled to a storage area. The driver was unable to judge the position of the tynes in relation to the stacks of tyres, so the truck driver had agreed to direct him.

The carrier driver then had trouble sliding the tynes under the last stack of three tyres to be removed from the trailer, so it was decided to tilt the stack so the truck driver could place a timber glut under the tyres. The tynes were then positioned under the load and lifted vertically clear of the trailer.

The carrier driver then started to reverse while looking behind him. As this was happening, the truck driver moved between the raised load and the trailer to remove the glut. The load began to shift and the carrier called out to warn the truck driver, who had his back to the load and could not hear him. The load fell forward, hitting the truck driver and causing a broken leg, three broken ribs and a dislocated hip.

Factors

- A pedestrian (truck driver) was in the immediate vicinity of the load during unloading.
- Unloading of the trailer continued even though the carrier driver was aware that a pedestrian was in the immediate vicinity.
- The tyres were being lifted two and three at a time instead of one at a time, which could have made the load(s) more stable.
- The company did not have a traffic management system in place for the unloading/loading of trucks.

Recommendations

1. Establish an exclusion zone around the area where trucks are being unloaded/loaded by a forklift or other mobile plant.
2. Supply adequate information, instruction and training of persons involved in the unloading/loading of trucks.
3. 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.
4. Ensure that only one tyre is lifted at a time if loads of more than one are likely to be unstable.

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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