

Safety and health alert

15/96 Young trolley collector killed

Incident

A thirteen year old part time trolley collector died collecting trolleys at Karratha City shopping Centre in July 1996.

The young worker collected five trolleys in a line and pushed them towards a small ramp. An elastic strap with a metal hook at each end, commonly known as an "occy strap", held the trolleys together.

The front three trolleys separated going down the ramp, stretching the occy (ocky) strap. The hook nearest the worker straightened out and the strap recoiled upwards around the nearest trolley handle with considerable force, striking the young worker in the throat and causing fatal injuries.

Factors

Use of an occy strap. The strap and the fittings had no guaranteed safe working load.

Clear guidelines for safe systems of trolley collection were not issued to employees, and occy straps were not prohibited.

Adequate supervision and instruction were not given.

Recommendations

1. Employers must ensure elastic straps (occy straps) are not used in the workplace to secure loads.
2. Employers must ensure a safe system of work is used for trolley collections at all times.
3. It is extremely important that employers protect the safety and health of young workers who have no practical experience by providing adequate instruction, training and supervision.

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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