

Safety and health alert

25/96 Use of a forklift with an attachment

Incident

A sub-contract truck driver crushed his right hand while unloading electrical transformers at a transport distribution depot in Jandakot in October 1996.

A forklift with a jib attachment was used to lift the transformers from the truck tray and position them in the open yard. The jib attachment was not adequately secured to the forklift carriage and when under load, it slid off the forklift tynes, severely crushing the truck driver's fingers against the transformers being lifted.

Factors

1. The jib attachment was not adequately secured to the forklift carriage to prevent it from sliding off the forklift tynes.
2. Inadequate equipment was being used for the task in that the forklift driver had to tilt the forklift mast forward to enable the sling to reach the transformer being lifted.
3. The lifting gear was poorly maintained.
4. Supervision of the task was inadequate.

Recommendations

1. Forklifts should only be used for lifting when a crane of sufficient capacity is not available.
2. If a forklift with a lifting attachment is used, ensure the attachment is adequately designed. Australian Standard 2359.1-1995 Industrial Trucks provides guidance.
3. Any attachment to a forklift must be securely attached.
4. Forklift drivers involved in the use of lifting attachments must be trained in the safe use of the attachment.
5. Close supervision by experienced staff in this situation would have identified the poor work practices and a safer system implemented.

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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