

Safety and health alert

07/97 Working under a raised load

Incident

A 39-year-old Trade Assistant suffered a fractured leg, ribs and vertebrae while working beneath a raised load suspended from the tynes of a forklift truck during November 1996 in Kewdale.

The injured person was remounting a pump on a piece of drilling rig equipment weighing 1.75 tonnes which had been raised 1200 mm above the ground by a forklift. There were no supports in place to cradle the load. The load fell onto the injured person whilst he was working beneath the load trying to position and tighten a mounting bolt.

Factors

1. The worker was working beneath the suspended load and applying lateral forces to the load.
2. The 2.9 metre wide load was suspended on forklift tynes and not secured to resist any lateral loads.
3. The use of support stands were considered but none with adequate strength were readily available.
4. Supervision of the work method utilized was inadequate.

Recommendations

1. Employers must ensure safe systems are used at all times so that employees are not exposed to hazards.
2. Working under a suspended load should be avoided as far as practicable. See regulation 4.53(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996.
3. Where possible, use support stands of sufficient strength and adequate stability.
4. If working under a suspended load is the only practicable approach, ensure the requirements of regulation 4.53(6) are complied with.

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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