

Safety and health alert

14/01 Employee falls from pallet

Incident

An employee at a Welshpool trucking company suffered a fractured vertebrae when he fell two metres to the ground from a wooden pallet that was on the raised fork arms of a forklift truck. The employee was attempting to remove boxes from a forty foot curtain trailer.

Despite training in forklift operation, the employee did not use an appropriate work platform as detailed in Section 12.3.2 of Australian Standard 2359.1-1995. This was contrary to Section 3.8 of Australian Standard 2359.2-1985 for forklift operations, and Regulation 4.55 of the *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996* states industrial lift trucks operation shall be in accordance with AS 2359.2.

Factors

1. Using an inappropriate device for elevating a person on a forklift truck.
2. Failure to operate forklift truck in accordance with Regulation 4.55.

Recommendations

No person should ride on pallets or be elevated by a forklift truck unless they are in a work platform that conforms with Section 12.3 of AS 2359.1-1995, that is mechanically attached to the forklift.

The operation of forklift trucks shall conform with AS 2359.2-1985 at all times. Persons operating forklift trucks must be trained to the requirements of AS 2359.2.

The WorkSafe Western Australia Commission *Code of Practice on the Prevention of Falls at Workplaces* should be consulted for any work undertaken where there is a risk of injury from falling. The elimination of working at height could have been a control option in this case as the boxes which were located on a wooden pallet could have been lowered to ground level and the boxes removed safely, eliminating the need to elevate the person in the first place.

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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