

Maintenance to Forklift Trucks

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NSW WorkCover warns of the danger of supporting the carriage and tines of a forklift truck in a raised position following an incident in which a worker was killed.

The carriage of the forklift was raised so that the area behind the carriage could be serviced easily, and so that oil pressure could be released from the hydraulic lines allowing access to the rams, seals and "O" rings. The supporting timber originally used was hardwood, one piece was placed in the channel upright and another diagonally across. The diagonal piece, however, obstructed the mechanic from working on the hydraulic system.

Another piece of softwood was then placed underneath the mast and strutted diagonally onto the floor. The original pieces of hardwood were removed by the mechanic. The softwood slipped and shattered, allowing the mast to fall, killing the mechanic.

Recommendations;

One of the following two alternatives should be observed:

- The use of a more substantial structure such as a metal frame to support the tines and carriage in the raised position where hardwood is used to support the carriage (this is common industry practice)
- Softwood or damaged hardwood should not be used. A method of locking the supports in the mast channels should be used to prevent accidental removal or slipping, ensuring that minimum time is spent with the carriage in a raised position.

For further information contact the NSW WorkCover Information Centre on 13 10 50.



Teenage Workers' First Jobs Should Not Be Their Last

Minister for WorkCover, Rob Hulls, encourages employers who give teenagers their first part-time job to ensure the experience is positive, safe and rewarding.

"Young workers are vulnerable. Because of their inexperience, risks can be even greater. Employers need to anticipate what could go wrong and put prevention strategies in place."

"Young and inexperienced workers should not perform complicated tasks or jobs involving the use of sophisticated machinery until they are properly trained and experienced."

Mr Hulls said recent statistics reminded workers and employers of the need to take extra care.

Between July 2003 to June 2004:

- 782 young workers aged 15 to 19 years were injured seriously enough at work to make a workplace injury claim
- 573 of them males and 209 females
- 530 injuries occurred in Melbourne workplaces and 252 in regional Victoria

The main causes of injury to young workers were poor manual handling, being hit by a moving object and slips, trips and falls. Major types of injuries open wounds and fractures and dislocations.

"As Minister for WorkCover, I don't want to see employers end up in court because that means a tragedy has occurred," Mr Hulls said.

Victorian Certificate Requirements for Pedestrian Forklift Trucks

The purpose of this guide is to clarify the certification requirements for pedestrian fork-lift trucks.

Regulations

Regulation 6 of the Occupational Health and Safety (Certification of Plant Users and Operators) Regulations 1994 defines a fork-lift truck as: A powered industrial truck equipped with a mast and an elevating load carriage to which is attached a pair of forkarms or other loadholding attachment, including a truck on which the operator is raised with the attachment for order picking, but does not include a pedestrian operated industrial truck.

Certificate of Competency

A certificate of competency is not required to operate a pedestrian operated fork-lift truck.

Pedestrian Operated Fork-lift Truck Training

Whether a certificate of competency is required or not, the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985 places responsibility on employers to provide information, instruction, training and supervision to employees as are necessary to enable them to perform their work in a manner that is safe and without risks to health. Similarly the OHS (Plant) Regulations 1995 provide that if a hazard related to plant and its associated systems of work is identified and assessed to be a risk, an employer must provide training, instruction and information to supervisors and employees who are likely to be exposed to risks, arising from the operation of the plant.

