



Alaska FACE Facts

Occupational Injury Prevention Program
Section of Epidemiology
Division of Public Health
Department of Health and Social Services

March 1998

Worker Crushed Under Forklift Tines

Incident: A worker was killed after going underneath the forks (tines) of a forklift. He was working alone in a storage warehouse, retrieving a part for a loader. The incident was not witnessed. It was surmised from the evidence that the worker (the victim), while moving a pallet of mixed items with the forklift, noticed a trail of hydraulic fluid along the warehouse driveway. He drove the forklift back into the warehouse and unloaded the pallet from the forks or tines of the forklift. With the motor on and the brake engaged, he raised the tines to place absorbent pads under the mast and hydraulic system. Then, after removing one glove, he knelt down and reached under the left tine. It was surmised that he was trying to check the origin of the leak. The hydraulic system failed, causing the tines to collapse on his head, neck, and shoulder.

When a co-worker went to the warehouse to locate the victim, he found the victim pinned under the tines. Unable to raise the tines to free the victim, he went to a maintenance shop for help. Emergency medical services were notified and paramedics were dispatched to the incident site. Co-workers were able to raise the tines to free the victim. Finding no pulse, co-workers left the victim's position undisturbed and awaited the arrival of emergency medical technicians. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene.



Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the investigation, to prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- ensure completion of forklift training prior to the use of the equipment;
- ensure that only trained and authorized personnel be permitted to maintain, repair, adjust, and inspect industrial trucks (e.g., forklifts);
- ensure workers follow manufacturer and company safety guidelines when operating equipment.

The Alaska Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program is administered by the Occupational Injury Prevention Program (OIPP), Section of Epidemiology, Department of Health and Social Services under a cooperative agreement with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The purpose of FACE is to identify conditions that increase the possibility of work-related fatal injury and provide recommendations for countermeasures that can be developed and implemented by the employer.

**For more information or
a copy of this FACE report, contact the
Occupational Injury Prevention Office
(907) 269-8000
or visit our website**

<http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/programs/injury>