

Case 61. 23-year-old male paper production maker was killed when his head was caught between a low hanging overhead water pipe and the fork-mast of a forklift that did not have overhead guard protection.

On April 30, 2004, a 23-year-old male paper production maker was killed when his head was caught between a low hanging overhead water pipe and the fork-mast of a forklift that did not have overhead guard protection. The victim had successfully completed forklift training provided by the company and was licensed to operate a forklift. A vacuum pump located in the basement was not working. After locking out the electric motor, a coworker loosened the motor mount bolts. The coworker and victim needed a forklift to move the motor to facilitate its repair. There was 2 inches of water on the floor and the operators could not see a plastic drainage grate in the floor that covered a 5-inch deep u-drain. As they maneuvered the truck into position, the left rear tire broke through the grate and caused the right front forklift tire to rise off of the ground. With the forklift still running and in reverse gear, the victim and his coworkers attempted to free the forklift from the grate by using a 74-inch by 2-inch pipe as a pry bar. One coworker was adding his weight to the front of the truck to bring the tire to the ground while another coworker was using the pry bar to lift the left rear tire from the drain. One the right front tire moved down and touched the floor the forklift began to move in reverse. At this point, the rear of the forklift was approximately 8 feet from the overhead water pipe. The victim jumped onto the moving forklift behind the controls in the driver's position, with one foot on the side step and his head lined up behind the forklift's mast. The mast was in a fully lowered position; mast height was 72 inches. The victim was looking in the opposite direction of the forklift's travel. The forklift traveled approximately 1-2 feet with the victim in the operator's station before traveling under a 6-inch overhead water pipe that was approximately 74 inches above basement floor. As the forklift traveled under the pipe, the victim's head hit the overhead water pipe. His head was crushed between the overhead pipe and the forklift's mast. The forklift continued its reverse travel until it hit a wall. The forklift had been equipped with overhead protection but was removed to permit the forklift's use in the basement. The forklift was not required to have overhead protection when it was used in the basement. Emergency response was called and the victim was taken to a local hospital where he was declared dead.

MIOSHA issued the following Serious and Other citations to the employer:

Serious:

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, PART 21, RULE 2173.

An employee shall not place his or her arms or legs in either of the following positions: (a) Between the uprights of the mast, (b) Outside the running lines of a moving truck.

Inadequate position, employee was operating the powered industrial truck with body parts outside the running lines. The employee placed body parts outside the running lines of the industrial truck.

Serious:

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, PART 21, RULE 2177.

Before moving or stacking, an operator shall survey the path of travel in order to avoid obstacles, such as, but not limited to, pipes, light fixtures, and sprinkler systems. A safe distance shall be maintained from the edge of ramps or platforms while on an elevated dock.

Employee failed to detect and avoid drain cover in basement

Employee failed to detect and avoid overhead piping in basement

Serious:

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, PART 21, RULE 2185.

Prohibit driving with no clear view.

Inadequate view, employee not looking in the direction of travel.

Serious:

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, PART 21 RULE 2152.

An employer shall provide training to the employee before the employee's assignment as an operator of a powered industrial truck.

Inadequate training for operating hi-lo: (a) Employees failed to survey path of travel in basement, (b) Employee operating hi-lo while standing in basement, (c) Employees attempting vehicle recovery while hi-lo in gear without operator in control of hi-lo in basement

Other:

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, PART 21, RULE 2154(1).

Provide valid operator permit for powered industrial truck operators.

Expired permits.

Other:

DESIGN SAFETY STANDARDS FOR ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS, PART 39, RULE 1910.305(B)(1) ADOPTED BY RULE 3902)

Assure that unused opening in cabinets, boxes, and fittings are effectively closed.

No cover on electrical panels in basement.

Other:

HAZARD COMMUNICATION, PART 92, RULE 1910.1200(E)(1).

Develop, implement and maintain a written hazard communication program which describes how the criteria in paragraphs (e)(f)(g) and (h) will be met.

Inadequate hazard communication program: (a) No list of chemicals, (b) No Material Safety Data Sheets for propane.