

Case 152. 34-year-old truck driver was pinned under the forklift truck he had been operating.

A 34-year-old male truck driver was pinned under the forklift truck he had been operating. The decedent's forklift was on its side with no load on the forks and the mast telescoped up. The incident occurred in the yard near the loading dock where the decedent was working to retrieve empty bins. The worker who found the decedent called to another worker who used a second forklift truck to lift the downed one from the decedent. The decedent was unconscious at this time. Emergency services were called, and the decedent was transported to a hospital where he was pronounced dead.

There were no witnesses to the incident. According to the coworkers, the decedent had returned to work after a break shortly before he was found. He had been working in the yard to retrieve empty bins to load into his truck. The path to the yard involved several turns to approach the stacks of empty bins. Police department photos and measurements indicated that, in travel, the rotating tires of the forklift left a 19-foot rubber deposition arc path going into the second turn. Regardless whether the mast was deployed before the turn or in the process of the turn, the center of gravity was changed, and the vehicle carried over onto its right side. It was determined that the vehicle came to rest with 25 feet remaining to reach the empty bins. During the carryover of the vehicle the operator left the seat and was crushed by the outside of the upper rear cage.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citations to the employer at the conclusion of their investigation:

SERIOUS:

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

The employee operating the forklift had no permit, training, or testing.

SERIOUS:

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, PART 21, RULE 2187.

The forklift was being operated with load engaging means elevated to approximately 14.5 feet.