

**Case 232. 52-year-old forklift operator died due to crush injuries sustained while transporting a pallet of containers on the forks of a Crown Model 540 electric stand-up forklift.**

52-year-old male forklift operator died due to crush injuries sustained while transporting a pallet of containers on the forks of a Crown Model 540 electric stand-up forklift. The containers were located in a storage area in palletized stacks that varied in height (12-20 feet). The container stacks were arranged in aisle ways approximately 14 feet wide. It appears that the decedent, who was licensed to operate the truck, lifted a pallet of plastic containers from the top of an 18-foot-high palletized stack. After lifting container pallet, he backed away from the pallet stack. As he was backing, he may have been leaning outside of the forklift frame. The decedent had approximately four feet to maneuver the forklift between the stack he was lifting from to another stack directly behind the forklift. It appears as he was backing away from the stack he simultaneously turned the forklift and lowered the forks. The forklift backed approximately 8-12 feet from the stack at an angle. The decedent's head and body were caught between the forklift frame and another stack of containers. The decedent released the forklift control levers and the truck then rolled forward a couple of inches. The forklift did not have a safety belt or harness. A coworker heard a sound described as "plastic containers falling." He ran to the area and observed the decedent slumping down from the forklift. Several containers were still on the forks and containers were strewn about on the floor. The coworker ran to the forklift and placed his foot on the foot pedal brake so the truck would not continue to move and called for help. When additional coworkers arrived, they used another fork truck to lift the forklift from the decedent. Emergency response was called and the decedent was declared dead at the scene.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citation at the conclusion of its investigation:

**SERIOUS: POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, PART 21, RULE 2185**

A powered industrial truck was driven when the operator could not look in the direction of and/or keep a clear view of the direction of travel:

A clear view of travel was not maintained while employee was in the process of backing up, Crown stand-up powered industrial truck.