

**Case 303. 53-year-old forklift driver died when her Toyota forklift Model 8FDU30 carrying two paper bales overturned to the side.**

A 53-year-old female forklift driver died when the Toyota forklift Model 8FDU30 carrying two paper bales overturned to the side. The Toyota forklift had a 6,000 pound lifting capacity. The mounted, 2,000-pound *Turn A Fork* attachment could rotate; the bales could be lifted from the bottom or the forks could be rotated to the side position to squeeze the bales between the forks and then lift them for transport. The bales were stored in an outdoor storage area exposed to the environment. The paper bales were vertically stacked four high and in two rows out from the wall. The top of the first bale was approximately 41 inches from ground, the top of second bale was approximately 81 inches from the ground, the top of the third bale was approximately 112 inches from the ground and the top of fourth bale was approximately 160 inches from ground. Bale dimensions were approximately 44 inches wide by 44 inches high by 58 inches long. The decedent was using the *Turn A Fork* attachment in the side position to transport the third and fourth stacked bales from the outside storage area to another location for further processing. It had been raining hard for two days. She picked up the third and fourth stacked bales, which together weighed at least 4,108 pounds, 108 pounds over the maximum lifting capacity of the forklift. Without lowering the attachment to the ground, she backed the forklift approximately 12 feet while turning the forklift to the right. The concrete in the outdoor storage location had cracks, holes and low areas. As the decedent was backing, the tires of the forklift fell into a low area in the concrete that was approximately 1 1/8" deep. The forklift tipped to the left, and then to the right, causing the top bale to fall. The forklift tipped to the left again and tipped over. The decedent, who was not wearing the functioning safety restraint system, was thrown outside of the top rail of the overhead guard of the forklift. When the forklift landed on its side, the decedent's head was crushed between the guard and the ground. Two employees inside the building noticed that the processing area was empty so they went to look for the decedent. Finding her, they called for emergency response. The decedent was declared dead at the scene. When the forklift was set upright, the distance from the ground to the bottom of the forks was 112 inches.

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

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

- **RULE 2187:**  
A powered industrial truck was driven with its load-engaging means elevated too high:  
  
(Employee traveled in reverse approximately 12-feet without lowering forks, with load weighing 4108 pounds)
- **RULE 2193(1)(e):**  
An operator shall lift or transport only a load that cannot fall out of a basket or container or off the load engaging means during the normal movements of the truck.

(Transporting a load that fell from the load engaging means, one recycled paper bale was pinched between the forks and the other bale was on top with no means to keep it from falling off during transport)

- RULE 2193(d):  
Loads that were not within the rated capacity of the powered industrial truck were lifted or transported:

(The load that was picked up and transported exceeded the maximum capacity of the forklift, the average weight for one (1) bale of recycled paper is approximately 2054 pounds, the operator was moving two (2) bales with the average weight of 4108 pounds and the maximum capacity of the forklift is 4000 pounds)

**SERIOUS:** PULP, PAPER, AND PAPERBOARD MILLS, PART 63, RULE 6322(1):  
Keep aisles free of protruding objects, holes, or loose boards.

(The floor of the employee work area had cracks, holes, and low areas)