

Case 436. 62-year-old laborer died when he fell approximately 18-20 feet from a fruit storage crate raised by a forklift.

A 62-year-old Hispanic male laborer died when he fell approximately 18-20 feet from a fruit storage crate raised by a forklift. The decedent had noted light bulbs needing replacement in a fruit cooling room. He had informed maintenance personnel, but they were busy with another task. The decedent then asked a coworker to lift him up in an old apple fruit crate using a Hyster powered industrial truck, Model #S35XM. Responding police found that the crate bottom was rotted and the crate gave way causing the forks to penetrate through the crate. This caused the crate to flip in a forward direction ejecting the decedent from the crate. The decedent fell to the concrete floor, sustaining fatal injuries.

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

SERIOUS: POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, GI PART 21

- RULE 408.12167(1): An employee shall not be lifted or transported, except when a platform is attached to the forks by enclosed sleeves, a safety chain, or a mechanical device in such a manner that the platform cannot tip or slip.

Instead of an approved platform, a wooden apple crate was used that was not attached to the powered industrial truck. An employee was changing light bulbs in *Room X*, when the wooden apple crate with the employee fell from the forks, killing the employee. (*MIFACE changed the name of the room where the incident occurred.*)

- RULE 408.12167(2): A platform shall be equipped with a railing not less than 36 inches or more than 42 inches high and a toeboard. The railing shall consist of 1 of the following materials:
 - (a) Wood posts of at least 2 X 4 inch nominal stock; the top rail shall be made of 2 right-angle pieces of not less than 1 X 4 inch nominal stock and an intermediate rail of 1 X 4 inch nominal stock.
 - (b) Steel or aluminum pipe posts and rails of not less than 1 inch inside diameter and an intermediate rail of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch inside diameter pipe.
 - (c) Structural steel or aluminum posts, rails and intermediate rail of angle iron of not less than 1 X 1 X $\frac{3}{16}$ inch size or other shapes of equal strength.

A wooden apple crate with a 30-inch high railing was used to lift an employee with a powered industrial truck to change light bulbs in *Room X* instead of using an approved platform with adequate height railing.