



Serious Injury Avoided in Forklift Rollover

WHAT HAPPENED:

While the operator was dumping a loaded cart with forks at maximum height, the load container began to slide off. The operator abruptly backed up with the wheels turned. The forces from this sudden turn in reverse caused the forklift to overbalance and roll onto its side. The operator sustained a minor foot injury. Had the operator not been wearing a seatbelt, serious and/or fatal injury may have occurred.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

Direct cause of the rollover was due to the operator's failure to follow proper operating procedures. The stability of the forklift was compromised by failure to lower the empty forks prior to turning and moving. The department's training emphasis had been classroom-style with little formal field observation.



CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:

The department implemented the following changes to the Forklift Training Program effective immediately for all current and future forklift operators. A practical "challenge course" has been added. This includes training and evaluation of the required skills (inspection, lifting and carrying loads, driving forward, backing, maneuvering in both directions, etc.). In addition, documented training and observation of job specific work tasks with documentation has been added. This training and operator certification portion is given by a supervisor with forklift certification. The challenge course will be tested prior to use by students to ensure that it achieves the goal to learn/demonstrate skills. A reasonable time for completion will be established based upon the time required for an experienced operator to complete the course safely.

The above changes, in addition to the current classroom instruction, fulfills the OSHA requirements for a Forklift Training Program {29 CFR1910.178(l)(2)(ii)} which addresses forklift training as a combination of both formal instruction and practical training.

EH&S has initiated an audit of forklift training programs to ensure compliance with the above standard. Please contact Jennifer Jonsson at 392-1591 for assistance or questions regarding your forklift training program.