



H S E

HEALTH SAFETY ENVIRONMENTAL



Alert #: SA 10-21

Date: 05/14/21

Forklift Incident

We recently had an incident at one of our facilities utilizing a forklift. There were several findings during the RCA we want to share with our team in an effort to prevent incidents like these in the future.

While moving a piece of equipment, the forklift operator yielded the right of way to trucks entering the facility. While the trucks entered and maneuvered, the forklift became boxed in and the operator was required to wait for a while prior to completely finish moving the equipment using the forklift.

A common practice utilized when moving materials and/or equipment is to use synthetic straps. Many of the operators slide the eye over the forks to use them to lift things. Although this practice doesn't necessarily go against a company policy or regulation, there are several things that can go wrong.

In this case, the eyes were slid over the forks to move a welding machine. When the operator got boxed in, they originally remained on the forklift. After noticing that they were going to be stuck there for a bit, they hopped off and used this time to go to the restroom. The brakes were set and the engine was turned off. However, the operator left the forks over the load with the slings on them. While the operator was in the building, a driver walked across the yard to turn in paperwork. While walking near the forklift and welding machine, the driver walked into one of the forks of the forklift.

According to OSHA 1910.178(m)(5)(i)

When a powered industrial truck (forklift) is left unattended, load engaging means shall be fully lowered, controls shall be neutralized, power shall be shut off, and brakes set.

As described above, by leaving the forklift unattended with the forks up, it created a risk that could have been avoided. This is not something that is an isolated incident. We have come across situations like this many times which is why we wanted to share it with you.

Please be aware of your surroundings while working and walking through one of our facilities, or a client's facility. Operators should always travel with the forks of the lift at the lowest possible distance from the ground; and then place forks on the ground when not in operation.

Additionally, we learned that it has been a standard practice to perform "free rigging" with forklifts. Free rigging is the direct attachment to or placement of rigging equipment (slings, shackles, rings, etc.) onto the tines (forks) of a powered industrial truck for a below-the-tines lift. This type of lift does not use an approved lifting attachment. 29 CFR 1910.178(a)(4) requires that "Modifications and additions which affect the capacity and safe operation shall not be performed by the customer or user without manufacturers prior written approval. Therefore, a decision has been made to utilize a new attachment designed by GIS Engineering and fabricated within GIS. This will now be utilized in all of our fabrication facilities as we can produce them and get them out to the workforce.



If you should have any further questions or concerns, please contact the Corporate HSE department.

SAFETY ALERT