

NEWS ARTICLE #1

WORKER STRUCK BY FORKLIFT Fractured Leg

An accident that resulted in a personnel injury underscores the need for providing safe work areas and following safety procedures during forklift operations. In this accident, a worker incurred a fractured leg when she was struck by a forklift.

THE INCIDENT

A forklift operator working in a storage facility was maneuvering his forklift down an aisle and into a bulk storage area. The 15-foot aisle had only 7 feet of clearance because both sides of the aisle were being used for storage.

The forklift was carrying two spools of copper wire that were large enough to block the operator's view. Established procedures require that a vehicle with an obstructing load be backed into place, allowing the operator a clear view. Despite his impaired visibility, however, the operator did not back the forklift down the narrow aisle because the forklift's load was precariously balanced and because he wanted to watch the load as he drove.

While the forklift was moving down the aisle, a platform lift was being used to relocate material to a temporary staging area along the side of the aisle. The platform lift operator was standing in the aisle when the forklift collided with the platform lift. One of the forklift tines struck the platform lift operator and broke her leg. The platform lift and the forklift's skids absorbed most of the impact, and the forklift was able to stop before a more serious injury could occur. Slightly different circumstances could have easily resulted in long-term disability or death.