

# **NEWS ARTICLE #9**

## **FAMOUS LAST WORDS: “That will never happen to me!”**

**As the articles below show, it can and does happen.**

### **Case #1:**

In July 1997, a forklift operator at a trucking company was killed when he was crushed between the lift's roll cage and a metal beam in a trailer. The victim was reaching out of the forklift when he inadvertently activated a control lever which moved the lift into the beam.

### **Case #2:**

In October 1996, a laborer at a stone fabrication shop was crushed under four 700 pound slabs of granite dislodged from a storage rack. The victim was guiding a slab to the rack when the forklift pushed the stone slabs onto him.

### **Case #3:**

In August 1996, a masonry worker was run over by a rough terrain forklift at a construction site. The victim was crossing a construction lane to a coffee truck and apparently did not hear the forklift's backup warning alarm.

### **Case #4:**

In August 1996, a meatpacking plant supervisor died after slipping and falling 9 feet from the forks of a forklift truck. The supervisor had asked the operator to raise him on the forks so he could get some product samples from a storage rack.

### **Case #5:**

In May 1996, a warehouse worker was killed after falling 9 feet from an order-picker forklift truck platform. The worker was standing on the loaded platform as it was being raised to a warehouse rack.

### **Case #6:**

In April 1996, a warehouse worker was crushed under a 4,000 pound crate that fell from a forklift. The victim was spotting the unsecured crate that fell when the forklift passed over an uneven docking plate.

### **Case #7:**

In December 1994, a textile supervisor was fatally injured when his forklift was struck and overturned by a second forklift falling off a loading dock. The forklift had been improperly positioned near the edge of the loading dock to lift pipes to the roof.

### **Case #8:**

In March 1994, a warehouse worker was killed after falling from a pallet set on the forks of a forklift. The victim was standing on the raised pallet to remove a box from a warehouse rack and fell 12 feet to the floor.

# **Selected Fatalities Investigated in 1998**

## **EMPLOYEE STRUCK BY FORKLIFT**

Employee #1, a clerk assigned to the marine terminal, was walking on the wharf alongside a container top lift machine. A forklift truck, with a squeeze attachment carrying two rolls of paper, was traveling in the same direction as employee #1. The forklift truck continued forward and apparently the load (which was approximately 11 inches higher than the steering wheel) obstructed the driver's forward view. He struck and crushed employee #1 beneath the load.

## **FORKLIFT TIPOVER**

While an employee was operating a forklift, the forklift tipped over while the operator was apparently making a sharp turn at excessive speed. No seat belt was installed and when employee fell from the seat he was crushed by the rollover bar.

## **FALL FROM PLATFORM ON FORKLIFT**

The victim (employee #1) was found pinned between the mast and the frame of the forklift. Prior to the accident, employee #1 was raised approximately 6 feet high by the forklift operator while the employee was standing on a pallet that was not secured to the frame of the forklift. The operator left the forklift unattended while the employee was on the pallet pouring spice into a mixing tank.

## **CRUSHED BY FORKLIFT**

Victim was driving a stand up forklift into a tractor trailer to start unloading when the truck driver pulled away from the dock. The forklift fell back onto the forklift driver, striking his head, and apparently breaking his neck.

## **STRUCK BY FORKLIFT**

The employee was given instructions to take the forklift to unload a truck. The employee picked up the forklift located on the premises less than one half mile from where the accident occurred. Traveling down an incline, the employee attempted to make a left turn into a parking lot, struck a pothole in the road, and the forklift began to tip over to the right. The employee attempted to jump clear of the forklift, but was struck and killed as the forklift fell.

## **STRUCK BY FORKLIFT**

The victim was assigned as the scrap dumpster forklift operator and was in route to a dumpster located in the remote southeast section of the outside material storage area. The victim was utilizing a forklift rated at 4500 pounds. A metal dump hopper, equipped with a manual dump release handle, was attached to the forks of the forklift. The hopper was filled with scrap shingles. The victim positioned the load above the north side of the dumpster. He dismounted from the right side of the forklift, closest to the north wall of the dumpster, and tripped the dump handle of the hopper. As he dismounted, he failed to set the parking brake. As the load suddenly dropped, apparently the forklift jerked, causing the transmission, low on fluid, to slip into drive, and the right rear side of the forklift to travel toward the dumpster, pinning the victim against north wall of the dumpster. A crushing chest injury resulted. The primary cause of the accident was that the employee failed to set the parking brake prior to dismounting the powered forklift.

## **STRUCK BY LOAD TOPPLING FROM FORKLIFT**

A longshoreman was crushed when he was struck by a toppling load of fiber-board. This cargo had just been off-loaded from a ship and was on the dock awaiting transfer by forklift to an adjacent warehouse. The forklift intended to pick up a stack of three crates. The width of the crates had changed from previous loads to more narrow gauge. The forklift operator did not realize he was dealing with a more narrow cargo which allowed his forks to extend beyond the intended cargo's base. The forks extended some 10 inches under the base of an adjacent stack of three crates which was some 31 inches wide. When the operator raised his forks he not only picked up his intended load, but caused the adjacent stack of crates to topple onto the nearby longshoreman.