

FATALGRAM

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Date of Accident: March 4, 2009

General

On March 4, 2009 an employee was fatally injured while operating an industrial lift truck. The victim was found outside the cab area, pinned between the forklift's overhead canopy and the forklift's mast.

Description of Incident:

The fatal accident occurred when the victim, while attempting to unload flattened cardboard boxes from the industrial lift truck's fork tines, was pinned by the mast. The victim apparently left the operator's seat and stepped outside of the forklift's cab area in order to push the flattened boxes into the dumpster. He then apparently inadvertently engaged the hydraulic control lever, tilting the forklift's mast backward pinning him between the cab of the forklift and the uprights of the mast.

Alaska Occupational Safety and Health investigated the accident. The investigation revealed that the victim left the operator's seat, apparently in an attempt to physically push the boxes off of the fork tines. Apparently his feet slipped and his right leg contacted the hydraulic mast tilt control lever, causing the upright mast to tilt backward toward the cab's overhead guard. The victim was pinned between the overhead guard and the mast and died of asphyxiation.

The industrial lift truck was checked for mechanical deficiencies and was found in proper working order. Insufficient training was a contributing factor in this accident.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure that all forklift operators are properly trained to perform their duties safely and are aware of all hazards related to those duties.
- Develop and implement a written forklift safety training program.
- Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations for operations and maintenance of equipment.
- Ensure forklifts are inspected daily prior to operation.
- An employer should have a written safety program which includes enforcement and discipline procedures to ensure that employees follow the employer's safety requirements. The employer should take steps to discover employee violations and document disciplinary action taken.