Falling Cargo Crushes Worker



A dockworker was crushed by a falling stack of fiberboard. It was part of the cargo that had come from a freight ship and was being moved by forklift to a warehouse. The forklift operator started to pick up a load of crates. He did not realize they were smaller than those he had been hauling previously so he did not adjust the forks for the load. The overextended forks bumped an adjacent stack of crates, which fell on the other worker.

Many kinds of fatal incidents are associated with forklifts. Forklifts have rolled over, crushing the operator. They have fallen from the backs of truck trailers and from loading docks. Forklifts have struck pedestrians and been struck by other vehicles.

Factors leading to forklift incidents include:

- Poor stacking of loads
- Pallets in poor repair
- Unstable loads
- Loads which are too heavy
- Obstruction of the driver’s vision
- Lack of training
- Speed
- Stress
- Lack of proper equipment
- Poor maintenance
- Incorrect backing and turning techniques
- Failure to warn others about a forklift in use
- Poor communication
- Giving rides on a forklift
- Improper parking
- Failure to block and secure trailers and rail cars being loaded.