

General Workplace Inspectorate

Promoting Safety and Health in the Workplace

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ALERT

22 September 2003

Truck Driver Dies in Loading Accident

Incident

A truck driver received fatal injuries when 6-metre lengths of reinforcing steel rod fell onto him from a truck deck while he stood on the opposite side to the loading operation.

Circumstances

A truck and semi-trailer unit called at a steel factory and store to pick up differing size packs of steel. The truck was driven to one area of the factory, and loaded by gantry crane with some lengths of reinforcing steel along one side of the deck, then driven to another part of the premises to be loaded with more steel by forklift.

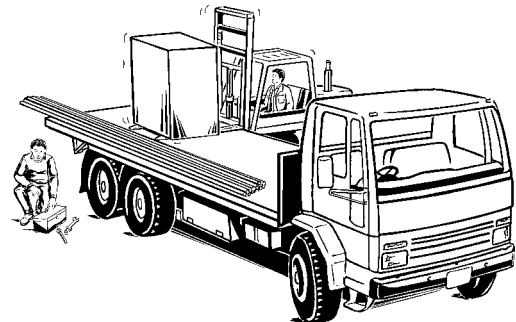
At this point the forklift operator had conversed with the truck driver at the rear of the trailer before moving off to pick up a pallet of steel a few metres away to place at the front end of the trailer. The truck driver is believed to have moved away from the vehicle into a store area inside the building.

After placing the pallet on the deck and centralizing it, the forklift operator reversed from the vehicle. He then heard a clatter from the lengths of reinforcing steel falling onto the ground, on the opposite side to the loading operation. The truck driver was found lying beneath the reinforcing steel beside the open stop box under the trailer unit.

Investigation

The investigation determined that:

1. The truck driver had moved into the danger area around the trailer unit placing himself at risk.



2. The forklift operator continued to load the trailer unit and believed the truck driver had gone into the store.
3. The trailer unit did not have suitable stanchions to prevent materials, such as lengths of reinforcing steel, from falling off the trailer unit.
4. At the time of the accident, standing on the opposite side of the loading/unloading operation around the trailer unit was still not recognized as a real potential for serious harm to occur.

Recommendations

1. Forklift operators (and crane operators) must not carry out loading/unloading operations unless the truck driver (and other assistants) has remained in the safe designated area.
2. The loading/unloading of trucks must not be carried out when people (including the truck driver) are in the vicinity of the truck deck.
3. Suitable side stanchions fitted to truck decks may be a practicable step to maintaining load security.