



CompWest Loss Lessons: Forklift Overturns

True Story

A forklift operator was driving a warehouse-type forklift on flat concrete ground outdoors. The operator overturned the forklift after making a sharp turn at speed. There was no cargo at the time of the tip over. Although emergency services arrived promptly and the employee was rushed to a nearby hospital, unfortunately he succumbed to his injuries.

The employee had prior experience driving a forklift when he was hired. A building security camera captured the incident, which proved to be very helpful in the investigation.

Lessons Learned

The following are some of the findings from the incident investigation:

- The forklift operator was driving too fast.
- A sharp turn was made at an unsafe speed.
- The operator was not wearing a seatbelt.
- The operator had not been given forklift certificate training at the time of hire.
- Having a security camera available to record the incident was very valuable.

Additional Resources

- [CompWest Forklift Safety Program and Resource Library](#)
- [Cal/OSHA Powered Industrial Truck Operator Training](#)
- [Cal/OSHA Operating Rules for Industrial Trucks Poster](#)
- [OSHA Powered Industrial Trucks eTool](#)

Prevention Tips

Consider the following to avoid forklift turnovers and other hazardous conditions at your company:

- Train-certify powered industrial truck operators – this can be done in-house with proper training or by hiring an outside professional.
- Conduct forklift training during the onboarding process or before allowing the employee to drive equipment regardless of the operator's prior experience – evaluation and further training can be conducted as needed.
- The training program should be in writing and follow the Cal-OSHA Powered Industrial Truck Operator Training requirements.
- Before operating the forklift each shift, inspect and document accordingly.
- Always use a seatbelt to avoid being ejected and crushed during a turnover or related incident.
- Install speed limiters on forklifts to prevent speeding.
- Forklifts should be operated at safe speeds.
- Assure unsafe forklift practices are immediately addressed.
- Post the Cal-OSHA Operating Rules for Industrial Trucks Poster in a conspicuous place.

The advice presented in this document is intended as general information for employers. For further information, please contact your CompWest loss control consultant.

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