

## Forklift accidents

### Lift Equipment – February 1997

**Sayreville, N.J.** – No one was injured when a gust of wind blew a roof frame being lifted by a telescopic handler into other frames at a construction site. The impact caused the building frame to topple.

**Truth or Consequence, N.M.** – A collision between a forklift and a compact pickup knocked the truck over, but no one was seriously injured. According to state police, the truck crossed over the traffic lane into the path of the forklift.

**Kent, Wash.** – A forklift operator was killed when he was crushed between the top bars of the forklift and the ceiling. The man was installing insulation in a warehouse.

**Turlock, Calif.** – A forklift carrying crushed cars struck a power line and sparked a blaze on the roof of a fire station. At the time of the fire, the station's engine crew was across town at a training meeting. However, the fire was put out in time to do minimal damage. The operator left the scene, returning after an irrigation district employee cut power to the pole and a nearby neighborhood. According to an irrigation district spokesman, the operator was fortunate he wasn't electrocuted.

**Garden City, Kan.** – A construction worker suffered fractured ribs and a punctured lung when he was hit by a load being carried by a forklift. According to the sheriff's department, the worker was measuring or hammering something on the ground and the forklift operator did not see him. The forklift was carrying a 12'x6' box of sealer.

**Roaring River, N.C.** – The president of a local company was killed when the forklift he was operating overturned and pinned him under it. The man was unloading steel tubing from a flatbed truck.

**Johnstown, Pa.** – A construction worker laying a water line was killed when he got caught between a cinder pot and the top of the forklift he was operating.

**Decatur, Texas** – A forklift tipped over while attempting to lower a pallet of old shingles from a roof. According to an eyewitness, the pallet caught on the edge of the building as it was being lowered. This caused the left wheels to lift off the pavement. The forklift operator was not injured then he jumped from the machine.

**Oakland, Calif.** – Nine employees of a seafood distribution plant were overcome by exhaust fumes after other workers were using a propane-powered forklift in a large, well-ventilated warehouse. The forklifts were being used to unload pallets of seafood.

According to a company spokesman, normally employees use an electric-powered forklift, but it was broken and no manager was around when the decision was made to use the propane machine.

### Lift Equipment – August 1998

**Westboro, Mass.** – A worker was seriously injured at a solid waste and recycling facility when a 1,500-pound bale of cardboard fell on him. The injured man was removing the trailer from his rig when the cardboard bale toppled from a forklift over a 4-foot retaining wall. OSHA is investigating the accident.

**Kent, Ohio** – An ammonia leak forced the evacuation of 50 dairy plant employees, the temporary relocation of nearby residents and the closure of roads. A forklift severed an overhead ammonia line at the plant.

**Dover, N.H.** – The mechanic responsible for the maintenance, safety and training of employees using forklifts at a printing facility was killed while repairing a machine. He was pinned to the ground after the carriage of the forklift he was working on dropped. Cause of death was asphyxiation. OSHA is looking into the matter.

**Brooklyn, N.Y.** – A forklift operator was killed when the forklift he was driving up a ramp tipped. Witnesses said the forklift veered off the left side of the ramp. He was thrown from the forklift, then crushed by it when it fell on him.

Lift Equipment – September 1998

**Chattanooga, Tenn.** – A man was killed when a 1,500-pound pipe fell on him. The man was using a forklift to hold the pipe while cutting the support legs from under it. When he cut the last support, the pipe rolled off the forklift and landed on him.

**Hanover, Md.** – A forklift operator at a tire shop was killed when a tire fell on him. The operator was trying to load the tire, which weighed 2,800 pounds and was 106 inches in diameter. It toppled from the forklift and landed on the operator causing extensive head and upper body injuries. The operator was pronounced dead at the scene.

**Camilla, Ga.** – Two construction workers were killed as they attempted to move scaffolding with a forklift. The load hit overhead high-voltage lines and electrocuted the two workers who were walking alongside the load and steadying it. The forklift operator wasn't injured.

**Denver, Colo.** – A construction crew was unloading a forklift from a truck when the forklift tipped. The operator's arm was pinned between the machine's roll bar and the ground. The roll bar was pushed about a foot into the ground and muddy conditions made extrication of the operator difficult. The operator's arm was severed in the accident. He underwent vascular surgery in an attempt to reattach the arm.

**Fairfield, N.J.** – A forklift operator was killed when he fell 25 feet. Apparently, the operator was moving boxes when they began to slip. The operator tried to push them back onto the forklift but was pushed and fell to the warehouse floor.

**Elizabeth City, N.C.** – A city mechanic was killed while working on a forklift. "We believe he was taking off the counterbalance to reach the engine," said the Elizabeth City sheriff. "We believe he took too many bolts off and it fell back on him."

**Gettsburg, Pa.** – A sanitation worker was killed while washing the walls of a warehouse. "We believe he fell from a cage that was attached to a forklift while cleaning the wall," says vice president of the plant where the accident happened. OSHA is investigating the accident.

**Gary, Ind.** – A truck hauling waste printing ink pulled over after another motorist pointed out ink was leaking from the truck. The ink was being hauled in 55-gallon drums and it is believed several of the drums were punctured by a forklift when loaded. Traffic was backed up for miles while crews cleaned

up the 110-gallon spill. Citations are expected to be filed in the accident against the company responsible for the loading.

**Altoona, Pa.** – A steel worker died after a steel pipe fell from a forklift and struck a 4x4 piece of wood. The wood flew through the air and struck the worker in the head.

**Salem, N.H.** – A trucker was killed by an unattended forklift. The trucker was securing a load when the forklift rolled down an incline and pinned him against the truck.

**Seattle, Wash.** – Computer equipment fell on a man killing him. The man was standing next to the computer equipment as another worker used a forklift to raise it from a pallet. It appears the load tipped and fell from the forklift. It fell on the man and pushed him through a plate glass window and pinned him against a rail supporting the window.

Lift Equipment – January 1999

**Hampton, Iowa** – A worker was riding on a forklift which was carrying plywood and being operated by another worker. As the forklift reached the unloading area, the rider jumped off and walked next to it. He stumbles, and the left rear wheel of the forklift ran over him. He was taken to the hospital and treated for injuries to his back and leg.

**West Point, Miss.** – A forklift operator was killed as he tried to drive his forklift up a ramp onto a truck trailer. The forklift lost its traction and began to slide off the side of the ramp. “It went off the left side,” said the county sheriff’s deputy. “It appears the driver either tried to jump or was thrown from the forklift.”  
The operator was struck in the head by the forklift’s roll cage and pronounced dead at the scene.

Lift Equipment – February 1999

**Yorktown, Va.** – A sailor was killed at a Naval Weapons Station after the forklift he was driving tipped over on an incline and crushed him. The sailor was also a forklift instructor. The accident happened while he was moving the forklift from one side of the building to another. Another person was on hand to help guide the movement per standard procedure. The ground where the forklift was being operated was covered in gravel and sloped down toward a concrete drainage dish. As the operator and signal person maneuvered the forklift around a pile of anti-submarine lines, the forklift tipped over. It appears the operator tried to jump from the forklift, but he was struck by the forklift as he fell. The operator was pronounced dead upon arrival at the hospital.

**Wasua, Wis.** – The driver of a forklift lost control of his vehicle and struck two power poles, causing 2,100 homes and businesses to lose power. According to the utility company spokesperson, the forklift lost power and the operator wasn’t able to steer or stop. As the operator lost control, the forklift started to pick up speed and ran into a distribution pole and a transmission pole. No injuries were reported.

**Woodside, Calif.** – A man suffered facial and hip injuries after the forklift he was operating crashed into a tree. According to reports, the brakes on the forklift failed and the operator drove backward off the road. The forklift slid 15 yards and crashed.

**Rochester, N.Y.** – An operator broke his leg after backing his forklift into storage shelves.

**Carteret, N.J.** – An operator was killed after the forklift he was driving fell on him. According to reports, the operator was driving the forklift near the loading dock. The rear wheels of the forklift rolled onto the loading plat. The plate, located between the dock and the tractor-trailer being unloaded, started to give way. The forklift rolled backward and began to fall off the dock. The operator tried to jump clear of the forklift. The operator remained conscious at the scene. He died several hours after the accident.

**Veedersburg, Ind.** – While performing maintenance on a forklift's hydraulic system, a worker's hand was crushed. The forklift slipped from the pallet lift used to support it.

**Kohler, Wis.** – An employee was struck by a forklift when entering one of the company's major entrances. The employee suffered severe leg injuries. The police chief says it is possible the two parties did not see each other. The accident is being investigated by the company.

Lift Equipment – March 1999

**Avon, Conn.** – An operator was using a truck-mounted forklift to unload cardboard bundles. The operator lost control of the machine and was pinned under it when it tipped. A co-worker used another forklift to move the tipped machine from the injured worker so a police officer could perform CPR. The injured worker was transported to a hospital and was in critical condition.

**South Ben, Ind.** – A forklift fell off a trailer and caused the closure of a road during the afternoon rush hour. The forklift was being transported on a flatbed trailer when it struck a railroad overpass and was knocked to the ground. The truck that was hauling the forklift was turned around so the forklift could be reloaded with a crane. Hydraulic fluid that had leaked from the forklift had to be cleaned before the road could be reopened. Police said the forklift was heavily damaged, but the truck and overpass were not.

**Londonderry, N.H.** – Two fire engines were dispatched after a drum of Tsunami-100, a common food additive that is dangerous in concentrated form, by a worker driving a forklift, ignited. "They were loading a trailer and they hit the drum with the forklift," said the police chief. "We isolated the area and they called in a cleanup contractor." Although part of the road around the facility was closed, the incident didn't affect operations of surrounding businesses.

**Colorado Springs, Colo.** – A laborer was injured while attempting to unload a 4,000-pound pillar used to support lighting. The prefabricated concrete column rolled off the forklift and pinned the laborer's leg. The forklift operator was able to free the laborer's leg, but the pillar rolled again and crushed the laborer. The injured person was pronounced dead less than an hour after the accident. OSHA is investigating the accident.

**Clovis, N.M.** – A feed-bagging operation's owner had to be taken by air ambulance after the forklift he was operating tipped over. According to a witness, the operator was looking over his right shoulder as he backed up a loading ramp. He was too close to the edge and the left tire went off causing the forklift to fall. Police talked to the operator and he said that he "attempted to jump off the left side of the forklift and was hit by the forklift on the head."

The operator also suffered injuries to his leg and foot.

**Irwin, Pa.** – A truck driver was killed while delivering supplies to a construction site. While standing near the forklift, he was hit by an unattended forklift.

A forklift operator parked his vehicle, set the brake and jumped into the back of the truck while the truck driver stood near by.

The forklift moved, hitting the driver. Cause of death was blunt force trauma.

**San Francisco, Calif.** – A granite worker was killed when a dozen marble countertops fell on top of him. The man was helping a forklift driver as the operator moved one 5'x8' slab when the others fell. Cal-OSHA is investigating the accident.

Lift Equipment – April 1999

**Glouster, Va.** – A forklift operator was killed while loading a tractor-trailer. According to witnesses, one wheel of the forklift went off the paved area into a rut, causing the machine to start to tip. The operator tried to jump from the cab, but was crushed by the machine.

**New Orleans, La.** – A stevedore was killed when he was hit by a forklift carrying a bale of paper in an open dock area. The forklift was driven by another dock worker. The accident is under investigation.

**Muscoda, Wis.** – An 11-year old boy was killed while operating a family-owned forklift. The forklift overturned and pinned the boy.

**Sauk Village, Ind.** – A worker was slightly injured when a forklift struck him. The man was working on a truck terminal's dock when the accident occurred. The worker suffered a fractured ankle.

**Maple Lake, Minn.** – A man was killed while working on a forklift. The forklift rolled off two floor jacks and crushed him. The accident is under investigation.

**Newburgh, N.Y.** – A furniture store worker was killed after falling 24.5 feet. The man was putting a plastic-wrapped chair on a shelf while standing on a platform elevated by a forklift. The man lost his footing and tried to grab the chair to keep him from falling. The plastic tore and the man fell to the concrete floor sustaining a massive head injury.

Police officials said it is company policy for workers to wear safety harnesses. This man was not wearing a harness.

**Harrisburg, Pa.** – A forklift operator moving bleachers into place for a political event hit three granite blocks in front of a memorial fountain. No injuries were reported.

**Greer, S.C.** – A telescopic handler was used as a tool by vandals to inflict \$12,000 worth of damage to a local football field. The machine was being used by masonry workers to carry and place cement blocks for a new wall. The workers accidentally left the key in the ignition.

The machine was started by the vandals and used to knock down a crikk column and punch holes in a wall.

The telescopic handler was also used to level two chain link fences and plow over one of the goal posts.

No suspects were being held or questioned. No injuries were reported in conjunction with the damage.

Lift Equipment – May 1999

**Newark, Calif.** – A worker was operating a forklift alone when he was killed. According to area fire personnel who were dispatched to the scene, the victim was found slumped over the controls of the forklift and was not breathing and had no heartbeat.

Fire personnel believe that the operator was raising a load while backing into a metal storage rack. The rack was just tall enough to enter the driver's compartment and crushed the operator's chest. OSHA is investigating the accident.

**Reese, Mich.** – Two volunteers were injured while using a forklift to remove Christmas displays from a local school.

The men fell 20 feet when the shipping pallet they were using as a platform slipped from the lift trucks forks.

Doctors treated and released one volunteer while the other remained hospitalized.

**Gretna, Va.** – A worker was killed when he was struck by a forklift. The workers were cleaning up debris outside an old building. The man that was killed walked to the front of the forklift to talk to the operator when the machine apparently jolted forward. The man was crushed between the forks and cab.

Lift Equipment – June/July 1999

**San Francisco, Calif.** – Workers were using a forklift to lift the front of a 24-foot long trailer off of blocks to hook it to a truck. Two welders were on the ground, trying to help stabilize the trailer and to pin the trailer to the hitch.

The trailer slipped and tipped over fatally crushing one of the welders. The other one escaped unharmed.

When the trailer was pulled off the worker, the body of a homeless man in a sleeping bag was also found.

Both men were pronounced dead at the scene.

**Lelend, N.C.** – A forklift operator was killed while trying to remove the first of two 20-foot lengths of pipe from a stake-body truck. The load shifted causing the forklift to tip and the load to crush him. The accident was turned over to the North Carolina Department of Labor and OSHA.

**Columbia, S.C.** – A forklift operator drove into a freezer when some boxes apparently shifted and fell from the forks. Officials speculate that the operator went around to the front of the machine to see why the boxes had shifted and was pinned. The operator was killed. Cause of death was suffocation.

This was the second time in two months that a forklift operator from the same company was also killed when he went to the front of his forklift and looked under the machine's forks to read a shipping label.

Investigators said he accidentally hit the control lever causing it to lower and pin his head. Cause of death in this accident was a broken spinal cord.

**Dearborn, Mich.** – A forklift operator-who had worked for a warehouse part time for about four years-was unloading a truck when he backed off the abutment. He was pinned by the forklift and pronounced dead at the scene.

Officers reported there were several beer bottles around the scene-two full, and two partially full and a couple of broken bottles.

“We suspect alcohol, but we won't know for sure until the toxicology report is back,” says the chief of Dearborn Police.

**Watertown, S.D.** – A man was run over by a forklift towing a trailer. The victim was helping another employee move the trailer when he apparently slipped on ice. According to police, the driver looked back and didn't see the fallen man and immediately stopped the vehicle. Police say the incident is an accident.

**Latrobe, Pa.** – A delivery truck driver was killed when he was impaled by the forks of a lift truck after the machine drifted down a slight grade. The driver was at the back of the back of a truck unloading track resurfacing materials when the accident happened.

The operator of the 4 ½ -ton forklift had set the emergency brake and put the forklift into neutral to help unload materials from the truck.

Officials had recreated the accident several times, and each time the forklift would drift towards the truck. It was determined that the forklift operator wasn't negligent in his actions and no charges would be filed. Additional mechanical testing was to be performed to the forklift, which had been rented from a local company.

**Vineland, N.J.** – An operator suffered a broken arm when a forklift he was driving fell off a loading dock.

According to a police report, a truck driver began to pull a tractor-trailer away from the dock while the forklift operator was still loading the truck. The truck driver thought the loading was complete and did not know the forklift was about to enter his truck.

Lift Equipment – August 1999

**Harrisonburg, Pa.** – A 35-ton capacity truck crane was being used to lift bricks to the top of a five story residential facility. With the boom extended about 50 feet, it had just unloaded and was preparing to make another lift when the load snagged on a telescopic handler that was driving by. Workers on the site tried to get the telescopic handler operator's attention, but were not able to. The crane operator let the wire rope go out as far as it would go, but the handler pulled the crane over. The crane operator jumped out of the cab before the accident happened.

Both the crane and telescopic handler operators worked for the same subcontractor. No one was injured. A metal fence and truck were also crushed.

**Tampa, Fla.** – A worker had removed bundled rebar from a flatbed truck and was moving two bundles into a hardware store's yard when the forklift tipped. At least one of the two 20-foot bundles fell on the operator. The forklift operator was killed in the accident.

**Marlboro, Mass.** – A forklift operator was killed when his head was crushed under the forks of the machine.

According to investigators, it is believed the forklift's forks became jammed and the driver was seeing what was wrong when the forks lowered and caught him.

The accident is now under investigation by OSHA and the State Department of Industrial Accidents.

**Coventry, R.I.** – A forklift operator was crushed and killed while installing shelves at a warehouse. According to reports, the operator did not lower the 15-foot mast while turning a corner. This caused the machine to tip.

A witness told police the operator tried to jump from the forklift, but did not get off in time.

**Greenville, N.C.** – Hours before a country fair was supposed to open, an amusement company employee was killed while trying to pull a tractor-trailer out of the mud in the back lot of the fairground.

The victim was trying to attach a chain from a forklift to the stuck rig. The forklift operator pulled the forklift forward and applied the brake, but the machine slid back into the employee.

**San Bruno, Calif.** – A forklift operator was using his forklift to try to pull a piece of heavy machinery into a second story opening. The machinery was being hoisted outside the building by a crane. A gust of wind blew the suspended machinery and pulled the forklift out the opening causing it to crush the operator.

**Allentown, Pa.** – Two trailers were destroyed and another was damaged by fire when a forklift punctured flammable materials inside one trailer during loading. Damage to the nearby building was minimal.

“Something happened as one of the trailers was being loaded, and it appears that the forklift punctured something and caused the aerosols to ignite pretty rapidly,” said the fire chief.

The trailer’s contents, which were destroyed, included paints, dyes, computers, hospital linens, and some alcohol-based solutions.

Lift Equipment – September 1999

**Lancaster, Pa.** – A man was killed when he was run over by a forklift that was coming to help move his disabled truck off the road. The truck had broken down because the clutch had gone out.

According to police, the truck driver flagged down an employee at a nearby precast concrete plant.

The precast company’s employee got a large forklift, which was being used to lift concrete products, and drove it to the truck.

As the truck’s owner reached to grab chains hanging from the front of the forklift, the machine failed to stop for reasons that are still being investigated and hit him, pushing him underneath it.

Police said the forklift and the truck are being inspected to determine what mechanical problems could have been involved.

**Grand Rapids, Mich.** – An operator was killed after his head was pinched with the lifting device of his forks. The operator was preparing to unload a load of paper when he hit the wrong lever, which triggered the machine’s lifting mechanism. The mast caught the operator in the side of the head and pinned him between the frame and the mast.

He was alive but unconscious for several minutes after the accident. He died shortly after paramedics arrived.

**Framingham, Ma.** – A forklift operator was seriously injured when the machine tipped forward. The operator apparently fell out of the machine’s seat and struck the machine’s mast.

According to the fire captain, the man was complaining of severe neck pain and was unable to move his legs. His injuries did not appear to be life threatening.

The operator was using the forklift to remove a tree from a tractor-trailer.

“I think there was too much weight on the front of the forklift,” says the fire captain.

**Jackson, Tenn.** – The operator of a forklift was in the process of refueling it when the gas ignited and engulfed the forklift, which was destroyed in the fire.

The exact cause of the fire is not known, but fire officials said the heat of the engine could have ignited the gas. The fire chief said that since the large propane tank, which was being used to refuel the forklift, leaks just a bit when the hose is disconnected, the heat could have triggered the blaze. It is also a possibility the engine was running while the refueling took place.

“We have not yet determined if the motor was running,” says the fire chief. “The only way we could tell is by looking at the key switch, but that was melted down.”

The operator suffered first-degree burns over 20 percent of his body.

**Sanford, N.C.** – A man died after being crushed by a forklift. According to the police, the man was replacing the forklift's starter when the free-standing jack, which was holding the machine, fell. The man was employed by a forklift service company and was doing contract work.

**Ponchatoula, La.** – A forklift, which was stuck in the mud, tipped over and killed the operator who was trying to flee from the falling machine.

According to witnesses, the foreman of the site was attempting to push the machine, which had a flat tire, with a bulldozer to the road so workers could perform repairs. The operator raised the mast to clear the forks from the ground, when the machine began to tip. The operator jumped from the cab, but was struck on the head and shoulders by the mast and killed.

**Pendleton, N.Y.** – A man was seriously injured when he fell off several pallets. He was adjusting the pallets, which were on a forklift. The man told his son to get off the forklift. When he did, he accidentally hit the gas pedal causing the machine to jerk forward. The man fell off the pallets and hit his head. The forklift then moved forward and ran over one of his legs before coming to rest on the other. He sustained major leg injuries and a concussion.

**Clinton, N.C.** – A teenager was injured in a forklift accident while working at a summer job. The sheriff's detective said the injured boy was with another boy when the forklift he was standing on somehow activated, carrying him up between steel beams and pinning him against the ceiling. According to the plant manager of the facility, the boys were not supposed to be in the area with the forklift.

**Santa Paula, Calif.** – A worker was killed on an agricultural job site when the forklift he was operating crashed in a lemon grove.

The forklift was carrying four large containers of lemons from the orchard. According to witnesses, the forklift seemed to be going faster than normal when the operator attempted to turn the machine. He lost control of the forklift and it tumbled down a 30-foot high embankment and crashed through a chain-link fence.

The sheriff's department investigators believe the accident might be attributed to faulty brakes or another mechanical failure.

**Covina, Calif.** – A worker at a major chain home-improvement store was injured while trying to straighten the load on his forklift. The operator tried to balance 800 pounds of pile board when it fell on him. The worker received bruises to his chest, right arm and his shoulder. His injuries did not appear life threatening.

Lift Equipment – October/November 1999

**Pablo, Mont.** – A college truck drive instructor was killed while helping students moved a heavy container used to ship ocean-going freight. The instructor was laying down wooden blocks to set the container on when he became trapped between the container and the forklift.

**Tuscaloosa, Ala.** – A worker laying sod was killed when the forklift he was using ran over him. According to the local sheriff's office, the worker stepped out of the forklift when he noticed the machine starting to roll. When he tried to jump back on, his leg was trapped by a tire and the forklift rolled over him.

**Deblois, Maine** – Carbon monoxide poisoning-apparently from a faulty forklift-sent 17 people to the doctor's office. According to a doctor with the Maine Bureau of Health, the workers sought medical care after experiencing a variety of symptoms including headaches and nausea. Ten of the afflicted had to be treated in a hyperbaric chamber to replace the poisonous carbon monoxide in their red blood cells.

According to the spokesperson for the company where the accident took place, the problem was traced to a faulty propane powered forklift that wasn't properly calibrated. The leased equipment has been taken out of service and electric forklifts are now being used to prevent future problems.

The first sign of the problem at the facility occurred a day before when the previous day's night shift began experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning after working in the cold storage section of the plant.

The forklifts are used to shuttle boxes of wild blueberries from the processing line to the cold storage chamber.

It was reported that the forklift was identified as a possible source of the exposure and taken out of service.

But, somebody mistakenly used the machine the next day.

Lift Equipment – December 1999

**Celina, Ohio** – A man was killed when a forklift he was repairing slipped from a hydraulic jack and fell onto his head. The worker was air lifted to a nearby hospital, but was pronounced dead on arrival.

**Syracuse, N.Y.** – A pedestrian was run over by a 5,200-pound forklift. The woman was hit during a trip to the supermarket. She had a crushed left foot, injured legs and a tire mark across her left leg. The forklift driver told police he did not see the woman crossing his path.

**Covington, Ga.** – A forklift fell from a loading dock, killing a foreman. Local police officers say they "saw a forklift lying on its side approximately 3 feet away from the loading wall with another forklift holding it up off the body."

The deceased had reportedly been complaining of stomach pains and was lying in the bay doorway to get air when the forklift operator was moving pallets. The forklift got too close to the door and backed out on top of the victim.

According to the county coroner, the man sustained chest injuries, and was pronounced dead at the scene. OSHA is investigating the accident to determine whether the employer was in compliance with governmental standards.

**Atlanta, Ga.** – A forklift operator punctured a chemical drum at a freight company, forcing the evacuation of a terminal building. The local protection division spokesman said 15 to 20 gallons of an undetermined pesticide were spilled in the accident.

**Salem, Ore.** – While stacking hay, a worker was crushed to death when a forklift backed over him. OSHA is conducting an investigation of the accident.

**Topeka, Kan.** – A man working from a forklift-mounted personnel basket sustained critical injuries when the basket caught on electrical lighting and broke. The worker and basket fell about 25 feet.

Lift Equipment – January 2000

**Columbia, S.C.** – A 13-year old boy suffered injuries when a forklift he was driving tipped over. He used a key that did not belong to the forklift and drove the forklift from where it was parked. All

workers accounted for their keys and a spokesperson for the company does not know where the key came from.

The boy was trying to drive over a bundle of stacked two-by-fours when the forklift flipped, pinning his left leg. It took fire fighters 10 minutes to use an inflatable air bag to lift the machine. Some roof trusses were destroyed in the accident. It's uncertain how much damage was done to the site.

The construction company had built 6- to 8-foot fences, but these do not stop people from climbing over. "We really want to encourage families and parents living around the construction site to tell their kids not to go into them," a construction spokesman said. "The barriers are there, but they are not impenetrable. We want parents to talk to kids about how dangerous construction sites can be."

**Morristown, Tenn.** – A homeless man sustained leg injuries after being run over by a forklift at a chicken processing plant. He was walking near a loading dock as a worker was loading a trailer with a forklift. Witnesses said he walked behind the forklift as it started to back up. After a bystander dragged the body out of the way, another driver got on the forklift and continued to load the truck until a supervisor ordered him to stop the machine.

A plant employee reported the back-up alarm on the forklift was not working and had not worked for approximately three months. A paramedic said that the victim suffered a dislocated left knee and a broken right leg.

**Carolina Beach, N.C.** – A telescopic handler fell over and knocked down power and phone lines. The handler was lifting a pallet of shingles when a strong gust of wind toppled the machine, sending the boom into nearby power lines. The operator was shaken up but not seriously injured. Power was knocked out to 3,092 locations in Carolina and Wilmington Beaches.

**Alliance, Neb.** – A forklift overturned and pinned a teenager who was riding in the forklift. According to the police department, the forklift was being driven by another 15-year old female.

The two teens had attempted to make a turn when the right side of the forklift went off the edge of a dirt driveway causing the forklift to roll onto its right side. The victim was ejected and the forklift landed on her. She was pinned about 10 minutes before rescuers could free her. She later died at the hospital. The incident is still under investigation and the local school is looking into a crisis management plan to help students cope with the death. The report did not indicate why the teens were on the forklift.

Lift Equipment – February 2000

**Port Huron, Mich.** – A large steel girder fell from a forklift and smashed a construction worker's leg. The man was standing on a beam dismantling a steel work platform when the girder knocked him off the beam.

According to a co-worker, the man fell about 3 to 4 feet after losing his footing. Police found him conscious and alert before he was rushed to a hospital for treatment.

**Port Allen, La.** – An employee at a local coffee roasting plant was killed while he helped a co-worker load a large bag of roasted coffee onto a forklift. The man was reaching through the forklift's raised mast and accidentally hit the lever controlling the mast. The mast came down, hitting him on the head.

**Washington, Pa.** – A lumber store worker was killed when the forklift he was operating flipped over, pinning him. He had been driving on a dirt road behind the buildings and was using the forklift to move material. The equipment was not loaded when the accident occurred.

“The tire marks went close to the edge, and it appears the forklift just flipped over, pinning him under it,” said a local police officer. The embankment was 3-4 feet steep. “There isn’t that much room to the edge of the embankment, once you get off the road.”

A tow truck was called in to lift the equipment off the operator. And OSHA investigator will look into the accident. Co-workers said the victim had worked with them for about six months and had driven a forklift in the past. Employees said they saw the forklift tip over and that the unit had not been traveling fast.

**Pawling, N.Y.** – A worker was critically injured when he was run over by a rough terrain forklift he had been operating. After parking the unit, he had begun walking down the hill when the forklift began to roll toward him. He heard the forklift behind him and tried to jump into the cab but the forklift ran over him, crushing his abdomen.

The construction foreman reported seeing the forklift start to move and yelled for the victim to get out of the way. “He made a bad decision,” he said. “Instead of trying to run away, he tried to save the machine, but it ran over him instead.”

A state police airguard helicopter transported the man to a local medical center where he received treatment. Police issued no tickets or citations.

Lift Equipment – March 2000

**Santa Fe, N.M.** – A man was killed when the forklift he was operating flipped and crushed him. He was driving the lift around and made a sharp turn when it flipped, ejected him and pinned him underneath. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

**Ventura, Calif.** – A delivery truck driver was fatally crushed at a farm when he activated a forklift, pinning him against the operator cage. He was pronounced dead less than an hour after the accident. The incident is being investigated by the sheriff’s department, the medical examiner-coroner’s office, and CAL-OSHA. The truck driver had just delivered a load of flattened packing boxes on pallets to the field and was watching the forklift operator take the first two pallets off his truck. The driver saw the operator stop, bring his load almost to the ground, put the machine in park and climb off. The delivery driver then spoke to the operator about wanting to see or check something on the machine and climbed onto it. While between the cab and the mast, the driver’s foot hit the lever releasing the arms, which quickly moved, pinning him against the cage.

The forklift operator immediately released the lever. The driver climbed down holding his chest and complaining that he was having trouble breathing. The man walked about 40 feet and collapsed. Paramedics had the man stabilized and took him to the local hospital where doctors worked 20 minutes trying to save his life. An autopsy performed showed he died of chest and abdominal injuries.

**Limon, Colo.** – A city official was thrown from a forklift while unloading material at a government building. A local hospital treated him for head injuries.

Lift Equipment – April 2000

**Winchester, Va.** – A forklift being used to erect steel girders toppled, killing one worker and leaving a second in critical condition. According to an OSHA administrator, the steel shifted, causing the forklift to topple. The incident is still under investigation.

**Elkhart, Ind.** – A man suffered a broken leg after he was pulled under a forklift. The man was trying to jump onto the driver’s side of the machine, which was being driven by another man. He caught his leg in the rear wheel, pulling him under the unit.

**Carmel, Calif.** – A worker sustained no injuries when the telescopic handler he was operating tipped forward. He was able to put the unit in neutral and successfully jump down from the cab.

“It looked as if they were trying to lift a pallet full of 2-by-12’s and the weight cause the crane to topple over and put it on end,” said a local police officer.

Construction workers at the condominium construction site removed most of the wood from the forks, and a tow truck pulled the telescopic handler back on the ground. “We didn’t know how it was going to react when it came down,” said the towing manager. The company was able to slowly lower the vehicle without any problems.

Lift Equipment – June/July 2000

**Syracuse, N.Y.** – An elderly woman was struck by a forklift, which was being used to carry bananas at a local market. She was walking in the parking lot when the unit hit her. The forklift operator told police that he did not see her crossing the forklift’s path.

The accident crushed the victim’s left foot, injured both legs, and left tire marks on her left leg.

According to police, the operator will not be charged.

**Harrisburg, Ill.** – A coal miner died after the forklift he was operating tipped over. According to the sheriff, the man was driving the forklift on a road leading into the mine. He drove over a 10-inch drop at the side of the pavement. The report indicates that the forklift continued several feet before tipping over.

The worker was reportedly wearing his seatbelt when the cab pinned his head against the pavement.

Mine workers used a loader to lift the unit off the victim, who was pronounced dead at the scene. The incident is under investigation.

**Jersey City, N.J.** – A forklift operator was arrested and charged with manslaughter for his alleged role in the death of his co-worker. The victim died from chest and head injuries when his forklift was tipped over by another forklift.

“We’re trying to find out if they were fighting or just horsing around,” said the first assistant prosecutor. “But we did learn that there apparently was a dispute between the two men at the workplace prior to the incident.”

When police arrived on the scene, co-workers were attempting to give the victim CPR. He was taken to a local medical center where he died.

Detectives learned that the accused tried to pick up the victim’s forklift with his machine. He knocked it over on its side, however, and trapped the operator. According to investigators, the incident was a senseless death.

**Annapolis, Md.** – A worker was moving lumber when his forklift struck a 1,000-gallon propane storage tank. According to the fire department battalion chief, the load shifted and hit the top of the underground tank, fracturing the valve.

Firefighters evacuated 50 people from the area and shut down the road for approximately 100 yards. No injuries were reported.

“It’s in a contained situation because it’s outside of the building, and we’ve eliminated ignition sources,” said the battalion chief. “But it’s relatively dangerous.”

**Ancaster, Ontario** – A forklift operator was buried by pop cans when the floor collapsed in an old hockey rink, which was used to store the soda. He fell from the forklift into a crawl space and sent pop cans flying. The worker was buried for almost four hours before firefighters freed him.

A firefighter said he could only see the top of the forklift in a sea of cans when he entered the scene. First, they turned off the unit by digging through a foot of cans.

“We didn’t know where the driver was,” said an emergency worker. “We were hoping he was still in the seat. But we dug down and found that he was not there. We finally heard a moan. So then everybody just froze to listen. We’d call out, and he’d moan back.”

An hour into the rescue, the men uncovered the back of the victim’s helmet. He was still wearing it and was conscious and able to talk.

The operator sustained a broken pelvis when the 1,100 pounds of skids fell on him. He was taken by air to a hospital.

The Canadian Ministry of Labor is investigating the incident, and building officials temporarily shut down operations. The building is leased by a recycling company. Damage is estimated at \$500,000.

**McConnelsville, Ohio** – A worker died after falling from the forks of a forklift. He was working on a light in the top of a building when he fell, striking his head. The man was transported to a local medical center by helicopter where he died a short time after arrival.

**San Angelo, Texas** – An inmate was killed and three others injured when a telescopic handler tipped over. They were in a personnel platform attached to the unit. The men were painting the second story of a school.

A school employee was operating the unit when it overturned, throwing the three men and striking a fourth who was on the ground. The assistant superintendent said the driver didn’t notice anything out of the ordinary before the lift overturned. The forklift operator was not injured.

It is unclear how long the first inmate was trapped under the telehandler or how the unit was moved to free him. Two doctors from the school tended to the injured men until paramedics arrived.

The incident is under investigation, and the corrections sergeant said authorities would take statements from the driver and others involved. “As far as we can tell, it was nothing mechanical,” he said. The victim’s body was sent to the county medical examiner for an autopsy, a practice that is standard when an inmate dies while in custody.

**Holland, Mich.** – A vertical-mast forklift was knocked off a truck when the driver hit a railroad overpass. The unit fell onto a highway, blocking traffic. Firefighters and police worked to remove the forklift. No injuries were reported.

Lift Equipment – September 2000

**Shiro, Texas** – A worker was unharmed after the forklift he was operating overturned.

“He was going down an incline when the forklift he was operating suddenly just topped over him,” a company spokesperson said.

Co-workers called for emergency assistance immediately.

“After he crawled out of the forklift and began walking around, we could see that he was uninjured; so we called back to cancel the call,” the spokesperson said. The operator was taken to a hospital, where he received a clean bill of health.

**Cincinnati, Ohio** – A 10-year-old boy died when he entered a warehouse and drove a forklift that overturned and crushed him. Police didn’t know how the boy got into the paper-recycling warehouse. “The boy was inside the warehouse, driving a forklift,” police officials said. “The machine turned over and crushed the child.” Two of the boy’s cousins found him underneath the forklift after looking elsewhere.

Police said the child was spending the weekend with relatives and had been playing in the warehouse earlier in the day. An investigation is under way.

**Wirtz, Va.** – Two men sustained second- and third- degree burns when a forklift caught fire. The fire ignited after the forklift quit working and was refueled. A worker was unloading pallets of fertilizer when the incident occurred.

The worker attempted to restart the unit with a battery charger while it was inside the trailer. According to the county public safety director, the worker climbed into the driver's seat and started the engine, igniting gasoline fumes that had accumulated inside the trailer. The fire shattered a window and burned part of the trailer before workers rolled it away from the building and unloaded the forklift. "It was a very hot flash fire...like a big ball of fire," the director said.

The worker was in critical condition and transported via helicopter to a burn center. He received skin-graft surgery for the burns that covered 60 percent of his body.

The farm-supply owner helped extinguish the fire and sustained burns on his hands. He was transported to a hospital, where he was listed in stable condition.

The owner said the fertilizer couldn't have caused an explosion if it had caught fire. "The building would have burned more violently than the fertilizer," the director said.

Lift Equipment – October/November 2000

**Calgary, Alberta** – A forklift operator died after being crushed between a semi-trailer and the forklift he was operating.

Co-workers later found him pinned between the left front corner of the trailer and the forklift.

"The truck was parked in the loading dock on a slight downward slope," said a spokesperson for the Alberta Health and Occupational Safety. "It appears he got out of the forklift, and it moved onto him."

According to the spokesperson, the forklift normally was not used by the company. Police will conduct a mechanical inspection of the unit.

City police and health and safety officials are investigating the incident. The official cause of death has not been released.

Lift Equipment – December 2000

**Santa Clarita, Calif.** – OSHA is investigating the death of a maintenance worker who was killed when a pallet jack fell from a forklift and crushed him.

The victim was standing underneath the raised forks when the jack slipped off them. The victim had planned to repair the jack.

OSHA investigators said they will look at the company's training policies and whether the victim followed guidelines. A report will also be filed, said an OSHA spokesperson.

**Stockbridge, Ga.** – During a road-widening job, a construction worker suffered fatal injuries when his 80,000-pound forklift crushed him. According to police, the forklift driver hit a 36-inch-deep culvert and then was knocked off and crushed by the machine.

**Daly City, Calif.** – A forklift driver was killed when the forklift he was driving home rolled over on top of him.

According to police, the vehicle rolled up onto a curb. The driver turned the unit sharply to the left, causing the forklift to tip over on its side, crushing him. The driver was pronounced dead at the scene. The accident is under investigation.

**New Baltimore, Mich.** – OSHA is investigating a forklift accident that killed a man.

According to police, the victim asked the driver for a ride and jumped onto the forks. The operator of the lift drove the unit as the victim held onto the forklift with one hand and talked on a cell phone with the other.

“The driver of the forklift hit a gash of brick in the roadway, and there are no shocks,” police said. “It went up and down, and he fell off.” The victim was run over by the machine.

Police said the initial investigation indicated that the driver of the forklift did not have a license to operate the equipment.

**Lowell, Mass.** – A man was injured when a forklift backed up and pinned him against a wall. The victim was standing behind the forklift when the accident occurred. Police said the unit suddenly backed up and struck the man. The driver told police he had intended to drive forward.

**Burlington, N.C.** – A forklift toppled over onto its operator and injured him. The accident was blamed on wet ground from a morning rain.

According to a plant manager, the wheel of the forklift became stuck in the mud and caused it to roll over. The driver suffered a bruised leg.

Lift Equipment – February 2001

**Hendersonville, N.C.** – A factory worker was run over by a forklift while he was walking through an open area of the factory floor. A spokesperson for the local police department said, “According to the gentleman driving the forklift, he [the driver] had glanced over one way, and the victim wasn’t looking when it happened.”

The victim was airlifted to a local hospital, where he underwent surgery and died early the next day. The accident is being investigated by OSHA as well as by the factory’s owner.

**Crockett, Texas** – The owner and operator of a pallet company died when he fell underneath his forklift while using it to push wood. He was operating the forklift on a road with a slight incline and pushing wood into a heap when the equipment apparently slipped down the incline, tipped over, and crushed him. According to the local justice of the peace, he probably died instantly.

**Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.** – Two men sustained head injuries when a falling forklift struck the trash bin on which they were standing, knocking them down to the parking lot approximately 15 feet below them. The men were both working at a warehouse at the time of the accident. According to a deputy sheriff, the men were standing on top of an industrial trash bin that was positioned against a loading dock. They were pulling cardboard off the tines of the forklift that was parked inside the warehouse at the dock access opening when the forklift then fell from the dock and struck the trash bin from which the men fell. The parking brake did not appear to be set on the forklift, while the wheels of the trash bin were not blocked, the deputy said.

The accident is under investigation.

**Springfield, Ore.** – A worker at a particle board processing plant died after being crushed beneath two stacks of particle board. The boards were approximately four feet high and 75 feet long. According to police, the man was doing cleanup work when the forklift operator knocked the stacks of board on top of him.

No charges are expected to be filed against the forklift operator, but the state OSHA will investigate this matter.

Lift Equipment – March 2001

**Corte Madera, Calif.** – A worker was killed by electrocution when the telescopic handler he was operating touched a power line carrying 7,200 volts of electricity. The man was passing wooden roof trusses to a worker on the second level of a building under construction when the boom to the telehandler hit and cut the wire.

According to a local coroner's investigation, the man apparently reached for a metal bar near the plastic steering wheel of the telehandler, and he was electrocuted instantly when he touched the bar. Cal-OSHA is investigating the accident.

**Westville, N.J.** – An off-duty worker for a water company was killed in a forklift accident. The employee was visiting a co-worker and assisted the co-worker in taking out trash. The victim operated a forklift to take a load of cardboard outside, and he hit a curb on his way back to the building, overturning the forklift. The man was then ejected from the vehicle and was trapped under the weight of the forklift. The victim was found by his co-worker, and police later arrived in order to remove the weight off of the victim with the help of the local rescue squad. The injured man was transported to a hospital where he was pronounced dead.

This accident is under investigation by the borough police, the county prosecutor's office, and OSHA.

**Manitowoc, Wis.** – An employee of an aluminum foundry was driving a forklift with the mast raised and struck a gas line near the ceiling. A natural gas leak then caused a major fire that resulted in an estimated \$2 million in damage to the building and the contents within the plant. Approximately 200 workers were evacuated from the plant, but none were injured.

**Conway, S.C.** – A worker sustained major injuries in a forklift accident. The employee had driven a forklift up a ramp at the rear of a building and gotten off the forklift. The forklift then rolled down the ramp and pinned the employee to the corner of the building. According to a spokesperson for the local police, the worker sustained internal injuries as well as injuries to her arm and leg. The worker was listed in critical condition.

Lift Equipment – April 2001

**Santa Barbara, Calif.** – A 57-year old man died following a forklift accident. According to reports by the local police department, the man was driving a rough-terrain forklift that was loaded with cinder blocks up a long driveway when, for an unknown reason, he lost control of the unit. The forklift fell 300 to 400 feet backward down the side of a mountain before coming to rest against several trees. Emergency personnel performed first aid and advanced life support on the man at the scene. The man was then transported to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead. The accident is under investigation by Cal-OSHA.

**Charlotte, N.C.** – Firefighters were called to a construction site after a 500-pound propane tank that was being moved by a worker rolled off of a forklift and burst into flames. According to a captain with the fire department, "The impact of the tank striking the ground apparently sparked the fire." The explosion and fire damaged two trucks and a nearby construction trailer. Officials estimated the damage at about \$50,000. No one was injured in the accident.

Lift Equipment – May 2001

**Loretto, Tenn.** – A worker was killed after he was struck in the head by a stack of lumber that was being unloaded from a forklift. Apparently, the man was adjusting some blocks on a floor near the forklift when the operator of the machine, who was unaware that the man was in the area, lowered the lumber. The victim was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

**Birmingham, Ala.** – A worker sustained crushing injuries when a load of more than a dozen plasterboard sheets was dropped on him during renovation work in a building. The accident happened as a forklift was loading boards onto a hoist that was taking material to the top of the five-story building. According to a spokesperson for the fire department, the load apparently slipped off the forklift, trapping the worker on the hoist. The worker was trapped for about 10 minutes before fire crews used lifting gear to free him. Paramedics gave the man treatment on the scene before taking him to a nearby hospital. The forklift driver was treated for shock. The accident is under investigation.

**Salem, Ind.** – A worker was struck by a forklift that was being driven by a fellow employee. According to authorities, the man was undoing the straps that were securing a load on his truck when he was struck by the forklift and pinned between the machine and the flatbed trailer. The victim died en route to the local hospital. This accident is being investigated by the local sheriff's department and Indiana OSHA.

**Fort Kent, Maine** – Twenty-six employees of a wood-specialty plant were sent to a local hospital due to a carbon monoxide leak from a malfunctioning forklift. The forklift was a propane-powered unit being substituted for an electric forklift that was not operating. All the employees were treated and released from the hospital later that day.

Lift Equipment – June/July 2001

**Junction City, Kan.** – A worker at a distribution plant was killed as a result of a forklift accident. The man hit some shelving with the forklift, and the shelving collapsed, pinning the worker. The victim was transported to a nearby hospital, where he later died.

**Gresham, Ore.** – A 24-year-old man died after he was crushed by a forklift at a home-and-garden store. The man, who had been working at the store for just one week, was killed when the forklift he was operating suddenly flipped over. According to witnesses, the machine turned over when it hit a soft spot in the back lot of the building. This accident is under investigation by local police, and reports of the incident are being forwarded to OSHA.

**Grand Forks, N.D.** -- An employee was hospitalized after being injured in an industrial accident involving a forklift. The man was hurt when bags of powdered concrete fell on him. According to a police spokesperson, the worker's forklift skidded across a slippery area and hit a rack that contained the concrete bags after he moved aside to make way for another forklift operator.

**Moses Lake, Wash.** – An employee of a landscaping company died in a forklift accident. According to the local coroner, the cause of death was blunt force injuries to the chest after a forklift fell on the man. Apparently, the worker was riding on the side of the forklift when he fell off, and the forklift toppled on top of him.

**Abbeville, S.C.** – A worker was lifting insulation onto the top of a cable plant's new addition with a construction forklift when he fell off the forklift, and it turned over on him. The man was taken to a nearby hospital and was then transferred to another hospital, where he died from trauma to the lower abdomen. This accident is under investigation by OSHA.

**Brunswick, Ga.** – Two men sustained injuries when they fell approximately two-and-a-half stories from a construction platform on a telescopic handler. According to local police, a hydraulic cylinder on one of the machine's back tires extended, causing it to fall over. One worker was taken to the hospital for injuries to his back and arm, and he was released the next day. The other man's injuries were minor.

**Prescott, Ariz.** – A construction worker died after he became trapped beneath the forklift he was driving. The man was pronounced dead on the scene from major crushing injuries. According to a spokesperson from the fire district, the man got off the forklift to do something. Paramedics estimated that the man had been trapped under the forklift for at least 10 minutes before someone discovered him.

**Roxboro, N.C.** – A man who was working as part of a crew loading a truck was run over by a forklift that was being used in the truck-loading operation. A spokesperson for the sheriff's department said the forklift was loaded with crates and that the forklift operator could not see the area in front of him. The man received CPR and was then taken to a hospital in a nearby town, where he was pronounced dead.

Lift Equipment – August 2001

**San Francisco, Calif.** – A construction worker died when an unsteady load of lumber on a forklift toppled and flipped the machine onto him. Local police said that the foreman attempted to clear a piece of lumber from a ramp when he noticed the load becoming unbalanced. He jumped on the rear of the lift truck to counter the load. The vehicle then flipped forward, crushing him.

**Camarillo, Calif.** – A forklift loaded with crates of food product struck and killed an agricultural laborer. The victim had told the operator to stop operating the forklift until it was refueled. While the victim was walking to get fuel, the operator engaged the truck and accidentally struck and crushed him. The operator, sitting to the left, did not see the man, as his view was obstructed by the crates. Cal/OSHA is investigating the accident.

**Ocala, Fla.** – A landscape business owner received a large gash on his neck after a metal platform attached to a forklift struck his neck. The man was checking the forks, which were jammed in the down position. He was trying to free the forks when they kicked up. As a result, the platform hit him in the neck, creating a 9- to 11-inch laceration. The man was taken to a local hospital, where he was treated for his injuries.

Lift Equipment – September 2001

**Hamilton, Ontario** – A 19-year-old worker was killed at a hardware store after being pinned between the forklift he was operating and a tractor-trailer. The man was using the forklift to retrieve tubes in the shipping area of the store and jumped off to collect tubes that had fallen. The forklift continued to move and pinned the man to the side of a moving trailer. The police and Ontario's Ministry of Labour are investigating to determine if operator error or faulty equipment caused the accident.

**Norfolk, Va.** – A distribution company worker was seriously injured when a forklift he was operating tipped over, pinning his right foot underneath. The man was taken to a local hospital, where he was listed in stable condition. According to family members, he lost part of his foot in the accident.

**Calgary, Alberta** – A warehouse worker was injured when he lost control of a forklift he was driving. A spokesperson for the local emergency medical services said, “It appears the man lost control of the forklift, went through a door and down a loading dock.” The man’s left leg was crushed under the weight of the machine. Firefighters and paramedics treated the man before he was rushed to a hospital. This accident is under investigation.

**Castaic, Calif.** – A construction worker was killed after a forklift he was operating tipped over and fell on top of him.

He was moving roof trusses when the forklift became unbalanced. After the accident, he was taken to a nearby hospital, where he was pronounced dead. OSHA is currently investigating the accident.

Lift Equipment – October/November 2001

**Ulster, N.Y.** – A forklift tipped over and crushed the legs of a 23-year-old employee of a roof insulation plant. Police said the man was lifting several foam pallets with the machine when a few of them fell to the ground. The man backed up and turned at the same time, causing the 3-ton forklift to tip over and pin him to the ground.

Police suspect the operator was not wearing his seat belt, which could have kept him inside the lift’s roll cage. They also questioned whether or not the man had been properly trained to operate the forklift. The case has been turned over to OSHA, which will determine if it will pursue the investigation.

**Santa Paula, Calif.** – A phone cable installer was killed when a forklift carrying him overturned and threw him down a steep embankment. The man had finished installing cable on a 45-foot cell phone tower and was standing on a platform about 35 feet above the forklift in a metal cage wearing a protective harness. The soft ground under the forklift gave way, causing the machine to tip and slide over a hill.

When emergency crews arrived, the man was still strapped into his harness and had suffered chest and abdominal injuries. Cal/OSHA has opened an investigation.

**Salem, Ore.** – One day after OR-OSHA was asked to anonymously inspect a mushroom farm for health and safety conditions, an employee was caught between a door and a trash bin carried by a forklift. The untrained forklift operator crushed the victim’s arm by mistakenly engaging the vehicle forward instead of reverse.

The investigation after the accident by OR-OSHA ended with 13 safety violations at the plant and more than \$7,000 in fines for the mushroom farm.

Investigators said the company did not fully train workers and failed to provide enough supervision for employees. The company has 20 days to appeal the diction.

OR-OSHA plans to return to the plant to inspect health conditions, including air quality.

**Kent, N.C.** – A man operating a forklift was crushed to death after the unit slipped from a flatbed trailer. The man was driving the truck and pulled it over to fasten the machine more securely to the truck. He was not strapped into the lift’s seatbelt when he tried to maneuver the machine to a better position, and the wheels slipped off the edge of the trailer, tossing the man from the cab and pinning him against a log. Heavy-duty air jacks were brought in to move the forklift, but the man died before he received treatment.

Lift Equipment – January 2002

**Grass Valley, Calif.** – A forklift operator carrying materials to repair the roof of a cultural center knocked over a utility pole, cutting the power, cable, and telephone services to more than 150 homes. The forklift also clipped an iron fence and rolled into a garden. The driver said he lost control when the forklift's engine stalled. The operator, who was wearing his seatbelt, was not injured.

Lift Equipment – December 2001

**Springfield, Ohio** – A forklift operated in a warehouse knocked down a support beam in the ceiling of the building and collapsed part of the warehouse. The driver of the machine was operating the forklift with the mast lifted higher than the doorway. The mast struck the 18-foot I-beam and left the other ceiling beams and boards sagging. The fire department removed several propane and gasoline tanks to reduce the risks of fire. The accident's damage is estimated between \$5,000 and \$8,000.

**Tredyffrin, Pa.** – A worker dismantling a large tent suffered injuries to his vertebrae and pelvis after falling 25 feet. The man, taking apart the metal structure of the tent, was standing on a platform attached to a telescopic handler, when the platform became detached from the forklift and the worker fell.

No reports have been made to investigate the accident.

**Merrimack, N.H.** – A forklift operator backed into a propane tank line at a hydraulics warehouse, causing a gas leak that lasted for about an hour. The operator had run over the top of an underground tank that came out of the ground and had severed the pressure relief valve. It took emergency workers nearly three hours to transfer the LP gas from the warehouse tank to another tank. After the leak was sealed with a wooden peg, the warehouse owner said only 20 percent of the gas remained in the damaged tank. The owners of the warehouse plan to replace the damaged tank with one that is approved by current standards.

Lift Equipment – January 2002

**Estero, Fla.** – A man was killed after a forklift ran over him at a landscaping site. While the man was bent over to pick up sod, the forklift operator moved backwards and knocked the man over, but stopped moving after the two back tires hit him. Before the accident occurred, the operator said he had looked around and didn't see anyone behind him, so he continued to back up. OSHA had not been contacted at the time of the report, and no files have been charged against the forklift operator.

**Aliquippa, Pa.** – An electric company owner died after sustaining head injuries from a forklift accident. The man was using the forklift to move cables on a jobsite at an apartment complex. The forklift began sliding backward downhill in wet grass and tipped over, pinning the operator. A tow truck was used to lift the forklift off the man, but he had stopped breathing.

**San Francisco, Calif.** – A construction foreman was killed after a forklift toppled over and crushed him. Another worker operating the forklift was carrying lumber across a ramp when the load became unbalanced. The foreman jumped on the back of the machine to counter balance the load. The lumber crashed to the ground, causing the forklift to become even more unbalanced. The vehicle flipped over and crushed the foreman.

Before the accident, the foreman's construction company had been cited by OSHA for unsafe practices, including a safety violation for not providing its employees with proper fall protection devices, resulting in \$18,000 fines. OSHA has not commented on this accident.

**Montgomery Township, Pa.** – A forklift operator injured his shoulder after he backed his forklift off a loading dock and tipped over the machine. The forklift operator backed up, fell about five feet, crashed through the garage door, and landed outside on the pavement. The operator made no comments after the accident.

Lift Equipment – February 2002

**Memphis, Tenn.** – A ride operator at a fair was killed when he was run over by a forklift. After the fair had closed, another worker was moving a metal box with the forklift. The ride operator attempted to climb on top of the box, but he lost his balance and fell under the moving forklift. His death has been ruled as accidental.

**West Chicago, Ill.** – A forklift operated in a warehouse leaked carbon monoxide fumes in the building and sent workers complaining of flu-like symptoms to the hospital. The levels of carbon monoxide in the air registered at 180 parts per million, which investigators said is a dangerous amount. The situation may have been worse, an investigator said, if the warehouse was not equipped with a carbon monoxide detector.

The faulty forklift was removed from inside the warehouse, and workers returned to the building after the levels of carbon monoxide dropped to safe standards.

**Columbus, Ga.** – A forklift operator died after the machine he was operating experienced mechanical failure, causing him to fall 35 feet to the ground. The operator was using the forklift to lift denim fabric onto metal racks. Investigators said the chain that holds the cab in place snapped and threw him out of the vehicle. The accident is being investigated by the operator's employer, as well as by OSHA.

**Fort Worth, Texas** – A 33-year-old woman was killed after she was pinned between a forklift and a shelving unit at a warehouse. When she put the forklift in reverse, she backed into the shelves. She was crushed against the front part of the cab and was unable to breathe because of the pressure on her chest. With an active safety department, the operator's employer plans to take all necessary actions to investigate the machine for malfunctions.

**Clarksburg, W.Va.** – A man was injured while unloading a forklift at an industrial park. The experienced forklift operator was unloading the lift truck, his employer said, and his sleeve got caught on the gearshift. The forklift moved forward and pinned the man between the forks and a truck. The injured man never lost consciousness. The worker's employer is investigating the accident.

Lift Equipment – March 2002

**Franklin, N.C.** – Two men were seriously injured when a forklift they were standing on tipped over. Both men were elevated on a platform attached to a rough-terrain forklift. When it fell, one man landed on his head, and the other man's leg and foot were trapped under the platform. He also suffered a broken vertebra. Officials did not speculate on how the forklift tipped over.

**El Campo, Texas** – A man was killed when a forklift he was driving tipped over and pinned him underneath it. The operator was driving down a dirt road. He over-estimated a turn and tried to correct it, but the forklift rolled over on its side and pinned the man to the ground. EMTs at the scene said that he died instantly from a massive head injury.

**Southold, N.Y.** – An intoxicated forklift operator was arrested and charged with a DUI after he caused a fire at a restaurant. The forklift that he was operating struck an overhead electrical wire, resulting in a structural fire. The fire department extinguished the fire and had the man arrested.

**Abington, Mass.** – A forklift operator remains in stable condition after his leg was crushed. The man was driving the forklift when it went over the edge at a loading dock and dropped approximately four feet. While the operator remained in the cab, his leg had fallen out and was pinned to the cement floor. The fire department used heavy-duty airbags to raise the forklift and free the man.

Lift Equipment – April 2002

**Danville, Va.** – A carpenter moving a load of plywood on a forklift and a worker walking behind the forklift fell through the floor of an 80-year-old mill. The floor collapsed from the weight of the forklift, causing the two workers and the machine to drop seven feet into an unused storage area below. Rubble created by the 7'x10' hole in the floor broke the workers' fall.

Both carpenters sustained minor back and leg injuries. The mill has been closed to all personnel until the cause of the collapse is determined and repairs made. The manager of the mill said the company is investigating the accident, as well as examining all of the floors to make sure they can handle daily loads.

**Cheney, Kan.** – A worker at an aerospace plant was injured while unloading a large piece of machinery with his forklift. The operator attempted to unload a large hammer die machine from a truck and had been using a similar piece of machinery to counter-balance the back of the forklift. The forklift became unbalanced when the operator unloaded the forks, and it tipped forward. One of the machinery pieces pinned the operator for about three minutes. He was taken to a local hospital where he was listed in serious condition.

**Somis, Calif.** – A 28-year-old female worker was picking lemons in a citrus grove when she was killed after being knocked off a ladder by a passing straddle forklift. She fell to the ground and struck her head on a section of hard dirt. She had few visible signs of head trauma, but the medical examiner said she suffered massive internal injuries.

Cal/OSHA investigators interviewed employees and retraced the events leading up to the accident, but a spokesman for the agency said that many questions remain. For instance, investigators do not know if the worker hit her head first on the forklift before falling to the ground. Cal/OSHA said the investigation could take up to three months and may cost the employer up to \$25,000 in fines.

**Long Island, N.Y.** – A forklift operator was killed when the forklift he was operating tumbled backward down a staircase and pinned him against a wall. The operator had been working at a bowling alley renovation project. He used the forklift to tow a backhoe from the first floor, but the attempt was unsuccessful. While the operator tried to tow the machine, police suspected that the back wheels on the forklift slid on the stairs. The operator was thrown from the machine as it tumbled down the stairs. OSHA is investigating the accident.

Lift Equipment – August 2002

**Portland, Ore.** – An 11-year-old boy was seriously injured after being hit and dragged through a parking lot by a forklift. The fifth grader was walking out of a store when one of the employees backed up into him. The forklift driver was not aware that he had hit the boy until witnesses yelled at him to stop. The boy had been dragged for about 10 feet. Witnesses at the scene saw the boy try to

run around the forklift. The sheriff's department filed a report, but they do not consider it a criminal case.

#### Lift Equipment – September/October 2002

**Charlotte, N.C.** – A forklift operator was injured on a construction site after the telehandler he was working from rolled over and down a hill, trapping the operator inside the cab. Firefighters, EMT's and police officers used rescue equipment, which included high-pressure air bags, to stabilize the machinery before they were able to release the operator. The man was transported to a hospital, where he was treated for his injuries. Fire officials asked OSHA to investigate the accident.

**Staten Island, N.Y.** – A man was killed after being crushed by a forklift on a construction site. Police said the man was driving the forklift and made a sharp turn, causing the machine to tip over. The man survived the fall. Afterward, he tried to lift the machine back up on four wheels, but the forklift toppled back over and crushed the man. Police are still investigating the incident.

**Park Hills, Mo.** – A warehouse employee was injured after a propane-powered forklift caught fire. Fire fighters on the scene said the forklift had been leaking propane throughout the building, and a spark ignited the propane and caught the forklift on fire inside the building. Employees at the warehouse were able to keep the fire under control until rescue workers arrived. The operator received minor burns to his arms and face. No damage was done to the building.

#### Lift Equipment – November 2002

**Dayton, Ohio** – A 14-year-old boy died after he was thrown from and crushed by a forklift. According to police, the victim and two friends had broken into a warehouse and were driving forklifts around the property in a dangerous manner. The boy's forklift went off the loading dock and he was tossed from the vehicle and crushed. The other two boys ran to a nearby residence and called for help. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

**Monterey, Calif.** – Elevated in a personnel basket, a cameraman taping a cable golf show was killed when the forklift tipped over. Witnesses said the forklift driver was moving on an uneven stretch of the green when the platform began to lean to the left. Then, the platform came down, the forklift fell on its side, and it crashed through a barbed-wire fence. Witnesses estimated the cameraman fell 25 to 40 feet and landed on his head. Rescue workers had to remove the platform to get the cameraman out of the wreckage.

A doctor attending the golf match said the man only suffered a broken leg and collarbone, but he was pronounced dead when the emergency helicopter arrived. The forklift operator was treated and released. The county sheriff's department and OSHA are investigating.

**Schaumburg, Ill.** – An operator was in critical condition after being trapped for 10 minutes under a 2-ton forklift. No one saw the accident happen, but coworkers told investigators the man was riding the forklift on a loading dock when it suddenly flipped over the dock's side, pinning him underneath. Firefighters called to the scene said two coworkers brought their forklifts over and tried taking some of the weight off the man. Rescue personnel used high-pressure airbags to raise the forklift. Fire officials, who are still investigating, said they are likely to contact OSHA.

#### Lift Equipment – February 2003

**Elkin, N.C.** – Two workers suffered serious injuries when they were thrown from a forklift that had tipped over. The men were elevated on the forks when the machine tipped over. Then they were catapulted about 24 feet and rolled down an embankment another 20 feet.

**Westfield, Ind.** – A foreman suffered head and facial injuries after an 8- to 10-foot concrete wall fell on him at a warehouse construction site. A forklift operator on-site was moving several insulation rolls when he ran into the wall, causing it to tip on the foreman. Coworkers lifted the wall and helped move the man from the debris before paramedics arrived. Officials said the likely cause was operator error.

Lift Equipment – March 2003

**Vineland, N.J.** – A forklift became lodged on a guardrail and barely evaded a plunge into the Maurice River after its operator hit an overpass and lost control. Police directed traffic, which was held up for nearly an hour, as a tow truck pried the forklift loose. There were no injuries reported, but the operator of the forklift received a summons for careless driving.

**Gardnerville, Nev.** – A construction accident ended in fatality when a man was crushed after the forklift he was operating tipped over. The man died from massive head injuries. The county sheriff's office and OSHA are investigating the matter.

**Wilkes-Barre, Pa.** – A woman was run over by a forklift in the yard of the construction company she worked for. According to witnesses, the woman was working in the yard when one of the idle vehicles slipped into gear and rolled over her. She was conscious after the accident and showed vital signs. She was flown via helicopter to the local medical center where she was listed in critical condition. The local fire department asked OSHA to investigate the incident.

**Calgary, Alberta** – A man died after the forklift he was operating fell on top of him and inflicted severe head and chest injuries. The forklift flipped onto its side and trapped the man between the ground and the roll cage. Co-workers called 911 and then used a second forklift to try to free him. Despite paramedics' timely arrival and efforts, the man died on the scene. Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety department is investigating the incident.

**Honolulu** – Standing on an airport service road near the terminal, an 88-year-old airport worker was struck and killed by a forklift. The forklift was carrying a large cargo container, and the operator did not see the man. The victim was taken to a medical center, where he was pronounced dead.

**Tuscaloosa, Ala.** – Two roofers were injured when the telescopic handler they were loading materials onto from a three-story building flipped over. The operator said he was lowering the boom when he felt the machine rolling over. The roofers were taken to an area medical center. One of the roofers suffered a broken ankle, and the operator sustained minor injuries. Tow vehicles near the accident were also damaged.

Lift Equipment – April 2003

**Lincoln, R.I.** – Wooden flooring of a second-story office building gave way underneath the weight of a forklift, causing the operator minor neck and back injuries after a 15-foot fall to the building's ground level. The 20-year-old man pulled himself from the forklift's cab and climbed out of the rubble before firefighters and rescue crews arrived. The collapse of the 50'x50' flooring section sent metal shelving, filing cabinets, and office furniture crashing down along with the forklift. "We couldn't even see the lift, it was so covered with debris," an area fire chief said. "We're very lucky that no one was

seriously hurt.” The ground level was vacant at the time of the accident so no other workers were injured. Engineers and building inspectors surveyed the scene and speculated that a weight overload of the second floor may have caused its collapse. OSHA is also investigating.

#### Lift Equipment – June/July 2003

**Leeward, Hawaii** – A 39-year-old forklift operator was listed in critical condition after suffering head injuries in an accident at a piggery. According to the fire captain, the man was unloading 200- to 300-pound bins of slop off the forklift when he fell from the machine and landed between the slop bin and a pigpen. Firefighters and medical service workers arrived on the scene, and the man was transported to a local hospital.

**Lewisville, Texas** – One worker was killed and another suffered five broken ribs after they were struck by a forklift moving in reverse. Two workers, a subcontractor and his supervisor, were talking at an industrial worksite when a 10-ton industrial forklift lowered its boom, backed up, and hit them as it turned right. The supervisor was pronounced dead on the scene, while the subcontractor was rushed to the hospital and released later the same day. Investigators at the worksite questioned whether the back-up warning alarm was functioning correctly. The cause of the accident is still unknown and under investigation.

**Grand Prairie, Alberta** – A 38-year-old man suffered injuries at an equipment yard when the forklift he was operating rolled over on top of him. Witnesses said the man was rounding a corner of a warehouse with the forklift when it became unstable and lost control. It tipped over onto its right side and pinned the man’s midsection to the ground. “He was pinned for a short while before we used other equipment to get him out,” a site supervisor said. The man was conscious when he was taken to the hospital. A spokesperson for Alberta Human Resources and Employment said a stop-work order had been issued to the company. The accident is under investigation.

**Lafayette, N.J.** – A forklift being hauled on the flatbed of a dump truck rolled over, fell off the vehicle, and struck several utility poles. No injuries were reported, but a portion of the highway was closed, and traffic was detoured until the telephone pole was repaired the next day.

**Cartersville, Ga.** – A man suffered serious leg injuries when the forklift he was operating tipped over and pinned him to the ground. Local fire department personnel flipped the forklift back to an upright position and extricated the man. Emergency workers then moved him to a nearby parking lot where he could be picked up by an emergency helicopter. He was transported to an area hospital where he was listed in serious condition.

#### Lift Equipment – August 2003

**Sacramento, Calif.** – A 51-year-old man was killed after he became trapped between a forklift and an 8.5-ton generator at a water-treatment plant. Serving as a signaler to the forklift’s driver, the man was guiding the machine to place a 17,000-pound diesel generator on the back of a flatbed trailer when the accident occurred.

Investigators said the man was moving in between the vehicle and the 6’x10’x6’ generator when the cable harness slipped, which caused the forks to raise up and a corner of the generator to swing toward the forklift, pinning the man’s torso against the unit’s front left tire.

“The forklift was having trouble lifting the load high enough to get on the truck,” said one OSHA official. “We will remain at the site looking at the procedures being used, as well as whether or not the

employees were trained in the procedures, and if they were being followed.” Both Sacramento police and Cal-OSHA officials are investigating.

**Moraine, Ohio** – A forklift operator walked away without injury after being trapped for nearly an hour underneath the rubble of a collapsed warehouse roof. An estimated 50’x200’ section of the roof suddenly caved in, and the warehouse’s employees evacuated the building. Three teams of firefighters were called to the scene. Rescue workers tunneled through the debris to reach the man, who officials say was caged in between steel columns, bar joists, insulation boarding, and other materials from the roof. “He was in a void space,” said a police deputy chief. “They were able to reach him by sound.” Workers had to cut through parts of the roof to reach the man because of the unstable condition of the material they were working on. The cause of the accident is unknown.

Lift Equipment – September 2003

**Klamath Falls, Ore.** – A 32-year-old forklift operator died after being pinned by the machine’s forks. The man was leaning out the front of the unit to pick a fallen object off the ground when his tool belt got caught on a lever and activated the forks, police said. The forks lowered and pinned the man against the body of the machine. Fire department and police personnel arrived on the scene and extricated the man. He was sent to an area medical center where he was pronounced dead.

**Chicago** – A 2-ton forklift toppled four feet off a loading dock and seriously injured a 49-year-old forklift operator. The man was working alone, authorities said, when the forklift apparently got too close to the edge of the loading dock, fell off the ledge, and pinned the man. Authorities said he attempted to jump off the forklift as it was falling to avoid being trapped by the machine. Fire department staff was called to the scene of the accident and used an inflatable bag to remove the forklift off the man. He was flown by helicopter to a nearby medical center and listed in critical condition.

**Lincoln, R.I.** – Two construction workers and a forklift plunged through the wooden floor of a century-old building’s second story to the first floor after the floor abruptly gave way. According to firefighters, a 20-year-old forklift operator and another worker were moving metal shelving in a warehouse when the floor collapsed, breaking a 50’x50’ chunk out of the floor and sending the two men downward, along with floorboards, support beams, bricks, and metal shelving. Both men were able to pull themselves from the rubble, said a fire chief, and the operator, who suffered minor injuries, was taken to an area hospital. The second man survived the incident unharmed. No one was present on the first floor of the building.

The fall also damaged the ground floor of the building and split a main support beam in half. All gas and electricity was cut off to the building following the occurrence.

A local fire chief said the cause of the accident was uncertain, stating it may have been the fall of metal shelving, an overload of weight, or the structure’s gradual deterioration that prompted the floor’s collapse. OSHA is examining the accident.

Lift Equipment – October/November 2003

**Tigard, Ore.** – A telescopic handler tipped forward at the construction site of a new home and hit a 32-year-old worker, killing him instantly, an investigator said. According to a spokeswoman for the county sheriff’s office, the forklift was positioning a 3,600-pound load of lumber and other construction materials on the roof when the entire unit tipped forward. Its back tires lifted off the ground, and the load fell on the man, who was climbing a ladder at the time. Investigators said he was pinned against a beam briefly before the forklift and its load shifted again, causing him to fall 12 feet

to the ground. Initial OSHA reports showed the forklift operator was unaware that the man was standing on a ladder underneath the load, the spokeswoman said. Oregon OSHA is continuing the investigation.

**Seaford, Del.** – A dangerous leak occurred after a forklift struck the valve of a 1,000-gallon propane tank near a busy section of roadway and caused major traffic delays. Volunteer firefighters worked for hours to stop the leak, but according to a spokesperson for the fire department, stopping the leak was impossible because the valve was sheared and underneath the tank. “Usually, we can shut it off,” he said. “But in this particular case, we weren’t able to. We had to let it drain.” Traffic was deferred around the leakage area while firefighters diluted the propane with water as it was released. There were no injuries reported, and no mandatory evacuations were made.

Lift Equipment – January/February 2004

**Heyburn, Idaho** – A 17,000-pound forklift on the back of a flatbed trailer struck an overhead catwalk while in motion, tipped backward off the trailer, and snagged a power line as it flipped over in the road.

The accident caused a break in the power line and forced traffic to be rerouted for two hours while employees from local towing and auto companies worked to upright the forklift, a police chief said. “It is possibly a total loss,” he said. “It destroyed the lift and the chains.” There were no injuries reported.

**Fallbrook, Calif.** – An out-of-control forklift struck a moving vehicle and became airborne, hitting trees, bushes, and three cars parked in a library parking lot before it came to a stop. The driver of the moving vehicle suffered a broken collarbone. Another woman was buckling her 3-year-old daughter into her car when she heard the forklift screeching toward her. “I heard this honking...and a crash, so I just grabbed my daughter and started racing,” said the woman. The 27-year-old forklift driver suffered cuts and bruises. No other injuries were reported.

**Crossville, Tenn.** – A 21-year-old construction worker died after the forklift he was operating overturned and pinned him underneath it. He was driving the forklift down a hill into a quarry when he lost control of the machine and bounced from his seat, witnesses told police. After veering down the road into a ditch, the forklift turned over and landed on top of the man, according to a police report. Emergency personnel arrived at the scene and inflated air bags to lift the forklift off the man. Tennessee OSHA and the local sheriff’s department are investigating the incident.