

Safety Alert

Forklift Fatality

As previously notified, on 22 July, 2010 a contractor was fatally injured after being struck by a forklift while walking in a northerly direction on an internal roadway at a domestic paper mill. The forklift was also travelling in a northerly direction on the same roadway, transporting a pack of eight (8) pulp bales, presumably from a pulp storage shed. This shed is approximately 350 metres from where the incident occurred. The forklift was travelling in forward motion at the time of the incident, which was the accepted practice at the site over this distance. There are no designated walkways or pedestrian exclusion zones on the internal roadway.

A joint investigation team was formed by the company and the CFMEU Pulp & Paper Workers District to independently investigate the incident and develop recommendations to prevent recurrence. The investigation team comprised an independent chairperson; representatives from the company and union as well as the Pulp & Paper Industry OHS&E Unit. The team completed a comprehensive incident investigation. In accordance with its intended purposes, the investigation team operated independently to reach its findings.

Probable Causes or Contributors

The investigation team's analysis identified three (3) areas that were probable causes or contributors to this incident.

1. This internal roadway is a common thoroughfare for mobile equipment and pedestrians.
2. There are genuine visibility concerns driving in a forward direction, and there are ergonomic issues associated with driving in reverse over anything more than a small distance.
3. There are some gaps in the Standard Operating Procedures that relate to the work done by the Yard Gang in moving substances in and around the site.

Identified Root Cause

The investigation team determined there were two (2) root causes of this incident. They were:

- ***Inadequate control of risks associated with pedestrian / forklift interaction.***
- ***Over reliance on individuals to manage these risks.***

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Pulp & Paper Industry

Occupational Health Safety & Environment Unit

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Investigation Recommendations

Following the determination of the root causes a series of recommendations were made, with a view to preventing a recurrence or similar incident.

Making the Site Safe – Reducing Pedestrian / Forklift Interactions

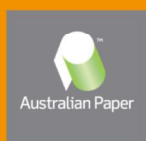
1. Examine the opportunities to re-engineer the movements or workflows of bales and broke aimed at reducing collision risks. Key issues to consider include reducing pack sizes, moving bale storage locations closer to end-use (eliminating double handling), and establishing alternate broke holding locations.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive traffic management plan for the internal roadway and immediate vicinity. The traffic management plan should ensure that the risk associated with pedestrian / forklift interaction is reduced. This may include: pedestrian exclusion zones; designated walkways and crossings; physical barriers to separate pedestrians and forklifts; designated safe zones for truck drivers and altered traffic zones.
3. Review and update the mill-wide traffic management plan to ensure it addresses and reduces the risks associated with traffic movement across the site. This plan should identify high risk areas and ensure they are prioritised for implementation.

Making the Task Safe – Improved Yard Gang Practices & Procedures

4. Conduct a review of all forklift related tasks to ensure equipment is task appropriate and incorporates all relevant safety features. These may include dual controls; swivelling, adjustable suspension seat with lumbar support and seatbelt; mirrors; flat screen colour camera and monitor; speed governing device and audio/visual warning system. It is critical to involve forklift operators in the review and selection of any modifications.
5. Update Production Services Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with the Yard Gang to identify and document the key steps and controls associated with the core or common tasks. The priority focus should be on the hot spots that are associated with forklift / pedestrian interactions. When completed, the SOPs should be in a simple user-friendly format and freely accessible in the field.
6. Promote and monitor the use of Job Safety Analysis (JSAs) by Yard Gang members. This is an established procedure for non-routine tasks and one which will benefit the Yard Gang as they can perform a range of different tasks. These JSAs may, if appropriate, form the basis for any future SOPs.

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Making People Safe – Greater Safety Awareness & Visibility

7. High visibility clothing suitable for both day and night operations should be mandatory across the entire site.
8. Conduct a review of the training system to ensure that it includes applied knowledge and skills consistent with the job requirements. The review should address the over-reliance on the skills transfer (buddy) system and supplement it with detailed, documented training modules and assessments. The training and assessment system should be consistent with the Pulp & Paper Industry training package.
9. Publish and promote incident and near hit learnings across the site at all levels. Focus on increasing awareness of hazards, educating about the importance of reporting and discussing near hits/incidents (not the individuals), and sharing outcomes and preventative actions.

Other – Enhanced Management Systems

10. Hazard management processes must comply with the documented standards / procedures. This will involve a stronger focus on addressing the gaps to ensure that all hazards are identified, assessed, controlled, and monitored.
11. Update the Emergency Response Plan to address: splitting the role of Incident Controller and First Aider; provision of a medical emergency crew; establishment of a Mill-wide alert system for medical emergencies; review and debrief whenever the Emergency Response Plan is activated.

A number of these recommendations may be valid across the wider pulp and paper industry. As a minimum requirement all employers have a legislative obligation to provide a workplace that is safe and without risks to health. hazard identification, control and monitoring are a key component to achieving this.

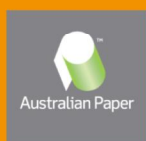
Further information:

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