

Struck By forklift—Insp # 1684364 Yates Services LLC

A 55 year old male, forklift operator, was crushed between two Yale forklifts. The accident was first reported to TOSHA as an in-patient hospitalization, but the victim later succumbed to his injuries.

The victim was injured when a forklift operator struck him and pinned him between Yale forklift #3 and Yale forklift #1. The victim had gotten off his forklift and walked over to the table in between bay door #5 and bay door #4 to use the work tablet sitting on the table. Through interviews with management, the victim was using a tablet to make a call for one of the trailers to be brought in. An interview with the employee that was operating forklift #3 that struck the victim, revealed she was operating in reverse, going around a metal stack of boxes containing parts. The employee stopped once she was around the boxes and looked to her right. The employee did not see anyone to her right and continued backing up. The forklift operator then turned to her left looking for bay door #4 to drop off the empty boxes. The employee did not see anyone and continued backing up. As the operator traveled along the bay doors looking for #4 bay door, she crashed into forklift #1 where the victim was standing crushing him between Yale forklifts #1 and #3.

The forklift operator stated she could not turn around to see what was behind her because her foot would let off the brake. Through an interview with the operator, she stated she was approximately 4' tall which was not tall enough to reach the brake and turn around at the same time. It appears that she was unable to maintain a field of vision in the direction of travel when traveling in reverse plus there were no mirrors on the lift at the time of the accident. The employee was not able to turn around when traveling in reverse and keep her foot on the pedals at the same time, therefore she was looking in the direction of travel. As a result, the employee struck the victim pinning him between the forklift she was operating and the stationary forklift.

On the day of the inspection, mirrors were observed on both forklifts the employees were operating; however, the Safety Manager stated the mirrors were installed after the accident. Through employee and employer interviews and demonstration, the brakes, horn, and back up alarms were working properly on both forklifts. The two forklifts were also equipped with a blue light that tells pedestrians the direction the forklift is traveling.

The Supervisor stated that he observed the employees operate their forklifts every day. It was also stated that the employee who was operating the forklift the day of the incident would not typically be in that area of the warehouse and would rarely have to drive in reverse.

Citation(s) as Originally Issued

A complete inspection was conducted at the accident scene. Some of the items cited may not directly relate to the fatality.

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Citation 1 Item 1

Type of Violation: Serious

\$5000

29 CFR 1910.178(l)(1)(i): The employer did not ensure that each powered industrial truck operator is competent to operate a powered industrial truck safely, as demonstrated by the successful completion of the training and evaluation specified in this paragraph (l):

In that a forklift operator was not fully competent to operate a powered industrial truck as she was not able to maintain a field of vision in the direction of travel when operating in reverse and reach the pedals at the same time. This deficiency resulted in an employee being crushed between Yale forklifts #1 and #3.

Citation 1 Item 2

Type of Violation: Serious

\$5000

29 CFR 1910.178(n)(6): Industrial truck drivers were not required to look in the direction of, and keep a clear view of the path of travel:

In that when operating the Yale forklift #3 (Model # ERC050VGN36TE085/ Serial # A968N20672T) in reverse, the operator does not look in the direction of travel. On 07/17/2023 an accident occurred while the operator was traveling in reverse and not looking in the direction of travel.



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