

Safety Alert

Forklift Incident

Details of the Incident

A forklift toppled over onto its load when manoeuvring during a loading operation. The vehicle came to rest on the pack of blocks that it was transporting. The investigation found that the vehicle was travelling with the load in a raised position, which compromised the stability of the forklift. When a braking manoeuvre was made the vehicle rolled forward onto the pack of blocks. While no one was injured, the consequences could have been much more serious.

The incident happened on a level section of yard, with good ground conditions and the investigation revealed that the driver's visibility, was impeded during the loading manoeuvre



Learning Points

The incident was due to a misjudgement by the forklift driver, manoeuvring with the load too high.

- Ensure driver selection, training and authorisation procedures are robust. Periodically monitor lift truck operations.
- Where possible, travel with the fork arms lowered to within 150mm of level ground.
- Avoid violent braking or sudden change of direction which may cause the load to fall off or the truck to tip.
- Do not travel with the load raised, because of the risk of overturning, except at creep speed as part of a stacking or de-stacking manoeuvre,
- Do not carry a load that blocks forward visibility. If it is absolutely necessary, then the lift truck should be driven in reverse. (Reversing should be avoided wherever possible but where it is unavoidable suitable precautions should be in place such as pedestrian exclusion and additional visual aids as appropriate)
- Seat belts must be worn at all times
- Never allow a lift truck to turn on, or travel across a ramp / incline
- Ensure effective traffic risk assessments and management plans are in place

Follow the principles outlined in HSE publication "**Safety in Working with Lift Trucks**" (HSG6).