Fatal 5 - Delivery driver killed in forklift truck incident. – MP Connect Alert

WHAT HAPPENED

A delivery driver died when a forklift overturned as he reversed it onto a trailer; the forklift had undergone repairs to the transmission at the plant hire company.

As the driver reversed the forklift onto the trailer, it fell from the side of the trailer bed. Tragically, he was thrown from the seat and became trapped between the chassis of the forklift and a neighbouring trailer suffering fatal crush injuries. Failures in inspection, maintenance, and seatbelt compliance were contributory factors.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from the HSE investigation revealed:

- The forklift had not undergone a full safety inspection after the repairs.
- Multiple defects were identified during HSE's post-incident examination.
- While pre-delivery inspections were performed for new hires, they were not consistently applied to machines returned to existing customers.
- Many operators rarely wore seatbelts and there was no system enforcing their use.

The plant hire company was fined £433,550 for breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, with additional costs and victim surcharge.

The image below shows the forklift truck involved in this incident.

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

HOW COULD THIS HAVE BEEN AVOIDED?

- Implement robust inspection and maintenance regimes.
- Perform full safety inspections to identify and repair defects before returning equipment to service.
- Provide effective driver training focused on reversing protocols and load stability awareness.
- Ensure safe loading procedures with proper trailer support and qualified personnel during loading / unloading.
- Enforce consistent seatbelt use.

KEY REVIEW POINTS:

- Audit inspection and maintenance regimes, ensure after-repair safety checks are mandatory.
- Enforce seatbelt use through supervision, spot-checks, and disciplinary procedures.
- Review loading / unloading risk assessments to ensure safe trailer use and clear hazard controls.
- Train all forklift operators on proper use, load stability, and site-specific reversing risks.
- Introduce protocol for safe trailer positioning, lighting, and movement during early-morning operations.
- Support a safety culture with leadership oversight, behavioural safety monitoring, and incident follow-up.

MPC SA04/2025 – 16.12.25

For more details, refer to the HSE Press Release: https://press.hse.gov.uk/2025/12/03/wonderful-kind

LOCATION:	**CONSTRUCTION/DELIVERY SITE**	**ALERT STATUS:**	**Normal**
ACTIVITY:	**MOBILE PLANT OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**	**DATE ISSUED:**	**17/12/2025 15:46:15**
SUB ACTIVITY:	**NO SUB ACTIVITY AVAILABLE**	**INCIDENT No:**	**04963**