Heavy equipment fell over during manual handling

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During manual handling of a heavy control cabinet, the centre of gravity was compromised, and the cabinet fell over onto a crew member's leg.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:

Line of fire

What happened?

During manual handling of a heavy control cabinet, the centre of gravity was compromised, and the cabinet fell over onto a crew member's leg, resulting in a bruise to their knee. The incident occurred when crew were moving control cabinets each weighing 130kg. Each cabinet was fitted with wheels by the manufacturer to facilitate handling. The activity required manual handling of the wheeled equipment to clear the access to the electrical panel in the switchboard room where they were to be installed.

What went wrong?

- The crew member attempted to prevent the cabinet from falling over, which placed them in the line of fire.
- The risks associated with manual handling of wheeled loads were not included in the Task Risk Assessment (TRA).
- The handling instructions were not followed.
- Persons were not positioned correctly during the manual handling.

Lessons

- If the job can't be done safely, **stop the job** and find a way to do it safely.
- Manual Handling assessments should address requirements based on the task, load, work environment and also on the individual capabilities of the crew members involved.
- Line of Fire assessment should be a part of task risk assessment and pre-work discussion.
- Look closely at safe positioning when conducting manual handling of wheeled loads.
- **Read the manual!!** Instruction manuals and guidance documents provided by suppliers/manufacturers should be reviewed by the work team with safety precautions adopted into TRA and work activities.
- Our members' crew fabricated a ramp to facilitate safe handling of such heavy cabinets – see illustration.

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