

Dropped pallet during forklift operation

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A pallet containing a load weighing 500kg dropped off a flatbed truck in close proximity to a delivery driver.

What happened?

The incident happened during unloading of the flatbed truck, which was carrying two cranes on pallets butted up against each other. The forklift truck operator attempted to offload the first one, but during this operation, the forks accidentally caught the second pallet, causing it to fall off the far side of the truck. At this moment, the truck driver had walked over to the far side of the truck, and the falling load narrowly missed him.



Forklift truck unloading pallet from truck

The fallen load after the incident

What went wrong?

Three causes were identified:

- The condition of the load - the way the pallet was positioned made it difficult to get a clean lift off the truck, and the high centre of gravity of the load made it easy to topple
- The forklift truck
 - The operator did not get off the forklift truck to conduct a pre-assessment of the load or check the fork positioning
 - The forks caught on the pallet behind the one that was being offloaded
 - The forklift truck operator did not stop the job after initial contact when the load appeared to wobble
- People positioning
 - Lack of communication/instruction to delivery driver on site

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Safe mechanical lifting



Line of fire

- Delivery driver moved into an unsafe position next to the load

Actions and lessons learned

- As a result of the incident the company rewrote its own procedures for 'Safe Use of Forklift Trucks and Mobile Elevating Work Platforms'
- Ensure with suppliers that cargo and loads are packed and delivered in a safe way

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