

A **31 year old male** employee was **crushed** when a clamp assembly of a forklift fell on top of him. It was explained that the victim was working alone on the recycle dock area to unload semi-trailers that arrive at the site with bundles of recycled paper. A custodian was in the area of the recycling dock when the incident occurred and after noticing the forklift had stopped and hearing a crash, he investigated to find the clamp assembly of the Hyster forklift sitting on top of the victim's torso.

During the inspection, it was observed that the pin and head assembly which is intended to sit on the top of the first mast section hydraulic cylinder was not in place. This pin and head assembly were found to have been removed from the top of the cylinder and were sitting between the forklift mast and cab, hanging by 2 hydraulic hoses and chains. A broken bolt was also observed to be on the floor inside the clamp assembly near the right-side clamp. This bolt was discovered to have been sheared/ broken. This broken bolt was one of four bolts that hold the clamp assembly to the block that is placed on the forklift mast. A yellow prybar was found on the floor approximately 4.5 feet away from the forklift's left side lying on the floor.

It was determined the most likely cause of the pin and head assembly to be removed from the mast cylinder was that the employee placed a bale of recycled material on top of other bale(s) and while attempting to maneuver his clamps/ mast, a piece of wire, from one of the bales, hung in the pin and head assembly pulling it out. If this were the case, it would prevent the first stage mast assembly from lowering all the way to the ground. It is believed the victim could not lower the mast to the floor; it is estimated to have stopped at about 5-6' off the ground. The victim may have been using the crowbar in attempt to reinstall the pin and head assembly when the clamp assembly fell on top of him, crushing him.

Other employees who work in the Recycle area were interviewed. These employees explained that when a person bids a job in the Recycle area, they start out as an A Driver. This is the lowest job in the Recycling area and the person who is responsible for unloading trucks and placing bales of recycled cardboard/ paper on the belt to feed into the production process. It was noted that current and past A Drivers use air hoses to clean cardboard from the forklifts, use pliers to remove wire that gets caught up in forklifts and use their hands to pull stuck cardboard out of the mast and clamps on a regular basis.

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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