

Shared Learning

COSTAIN

The Thameslink Programme

Issue Date: 7th July 2016 - For further info contact sharon.fink@networkrail.co.uk

Issue Number: TLP060 Title: Pallet Truck Accident

Overview of Event:

A load became unstable during an operation to move counterbalance weights from one area of the site to another on a pedestrian operated pallet truck. An operative sustained bruising to the chest when he was struck by the stillage and was taken to hospital as a precaution. The pallet truck was being used to take 2No. steel stillage's containing 2 x 50 x 20kg weights (total weight approximately 2200kgs including stillage's). The 2No. steel stillage's were stacked on top of each other and rested on top of the steel pallet truck forks. As the pallet truck entered the goods lift the tandem wheels jolted due to the raised plywood protective lip, the jolt caused the stillage's to move sideways and consequently struck the operative before they stabilised. The weights were being moved by operatives into the freight lift and taken to their location as the original planned point for loading with a telehandler was not available. The original team who should have moved these (another contractor) was engaged in unloading another delivery relating to the works.

General Key Messages:

- **Change:** point of work risk assessments should be undertaken when changes to the original plan occur
- **Communication:** any risks / controls relating to changes need to be briefed and understood by those undertaking the work

Photo of Event :



Actions Taken As a Result of the Investigations:

- Task Briefing Sheets relating to movement of stillages was amended to include need to forks to be inserted into pallets
- Brief to all teams about the implications of changing the WPP when areas/landing decks are not ready for use and the need to assess and undertake / document a Point of Work risk assessment by the relevant section engineer & the responsible Supervisor/s.
- Brief to all teams that if tasks are allocated to other work teams from other companies the responsible Supervisor needs to complete the Task Briefing on the activity and brief this to the operatives before work commences.
- A review of the Point of Work Risk Assessment process has been undertaken to identify a suitable suite of measures that will enhance the implementation of the PoWRA at site level.

Causes:

Immediate Cause – The stillages were double stacked on the top of the pallet truck forks as well as length ways instead of width ways, and this unstable transport position caused the load to tip on the pallet forks and shift position when the tandem wheels were jolted on the plywood lip between the service lift and adjacent concrete floor.

Root and Underlying Causes

Error-proofing conditions: Incorrect selection of equipment: the pallet truck used had a fork configuration that did not allow the forks to be inserted into the slots of the stillage. This resulted in the forks being put directly *under* the stillage [not captivated] and thus relying on friction to retain the load on the pallet truck forks.

Procedures: The correct method and equipment for transporting the stillage's containing the weights were stated in the Task Briefing Sheet, however, this information was not communicated to the operatives who were tasked with moving the stillage's. A different contractor ended up moving the stillages from those that had planned the works.

Communication: Failure to adequately communicate the importance of transporting the stillage's individually as opposed to double stacked which increased the instability of the load due to a higher centre of gravity with double stacked stillage's.

Organisation: The landing deck for the counterbalance weights was not available so the equipment had to be transported from another location than what was in the original plan.