Forklift Fatalities and Injuries Fatality Report



The incident happened at an agricultural cooperative (co-op). The co-op’s retail store was connected to the co-op’s tire shop and a warehouse. Also, on the grounds was an equipment storage shed, a fertilizer shed, and an outdoor storage area where 200-pound molasses animal licks were stored. A large flat concrete parking lot extended in front of the store entrance and around one side of the warehouse where a loading dock and ramp were located.

At the time of the incident a customer was helping the victim as he loaded a molasses lick into another customer’s trailer using a forklift. Approximately 5 minutes later, the customer heard a loud crashing sound. He ran over to the area where the victim had been operating the forklift and saw the forklift tipped over on its side. The victim was lying face down and pinned under the cage of the forklift and with one leg extended and the other leg doubled up under him.

The customer ran to get help. While he and a co-worker ran back to assist the victim, another coworker ran into the company’s store to call 911. The customer and co-worker were unable to lift the forklift manually and told another co-worker to get a front-end loader. As co-workers lifted the forklift off the victim using the front-end loader, the customer pulled the victim clear. The victim was conscious but having difficulty breathing.

The police and fire department responded to the scene at 2:00 p.m., the ambulance was dispatched at 2:08 pm. and responded at 2:09 p.m. EMS personnel examined the victim and inserted an endo-tracheal tube at 2:18 p.m. followed by a needle chest decompression immediately after, to help the victim breathe.

A medical helicopter was dispatched to transport the victim to a trauma center, but while the ambulance was in route to meet the helicopter, the victim’s condition deteriorated, and the victim was transported instead to a local hospital. The victim arrived at the hospital at 2:32 p.m. and was pronounced dead at 3:16 p.m. in the hospital’s emergency room.