Forklift Safety – Blind Spots Fatality File



Oregon Lumber Mill Worker Killed by Unseen Forklift Load

In Oregon, a 63-year-old lumber mill employee was fatally struck by the load of a forklift while standing in a shaded lumber shed. The forklift operator, rounding a corner into the shed, did not see the worker, whose movements were hidden in the driver’s blind spot.

The subsequent investigation pointed to several contributing factors: the workstation was located too close to forklift traffic paths, inadequate separation between pedestrians and forklifts, limited visibility in shaded areas, and unclear or inconsistently enforced safety practices – including a verbal high-visibility vest policy that was not documented or strictly applied.

This tragedy underscores how blind spots in forklift operations can lead to fatal consequences. It illustrates the necessity of designing workplaces to minimize pedestrian exposure to forklift travel, enforcing strict traffic separation, using collision warning devices, and ensuring operators are vigilant about their surroundings, especially in areas with limited visibility.

Source: Ohsu.edu