Forklifts Make Poor Personlifts



When in doubt, improvise. That old advice might work well in certain circumstances, but it’s dangerous if it involves compromising safety.

A malfunctioning ventilation door at a flour mill resulted in unbearably hot conditions for workers. The problem was the vent was located about 20 feet (5.7 meters) above the ground. Two workers decided to pile several pallets on a forklift and raise the machine to its maximum height so one of them could access the stuck vent door.

Their plan went awry when the worker lost his footing on the pallet platform and fell to his death. No measures were in place to prevent such a fall and the victim was not wearing a hardhat.

Investigators found that the worker who had been operating the forklift was not qualified to operate it. However, the company had allowed him to operate the machine on several previous occasions.