Steel Panel Crushes Bank Vault Installer



A bank vault installer was crushed to death between a forklift and a steel panel.

Ordinarily the panels are moved by a lifting device which is part of the vault panel. However, on this vault panel the device was damaged and defective. Instead, chains had been used to hold the panel in place on the forks. The panel could not be moved into the correct position because of the chains, so the victim reached up to make an adjustment to the chains.

The panel started to fall, pulling the forklift over with it. The victim was pinned between the forklift roll bar and the vault panel. He was trapped for 36 minutes before he could be extricated by the fire department’s jaws of life. He died of crushing injuries.

Don’t use makeshift lifting or slinging systems. In this case, the makeshift lifting arrangement, of chains instead of an eyebolt, did not work. When using lifting and pulling equipment, observe load limits and established safe work procedures.