

# Fatal 3 - Operator falls and injures his ankle whilst exiting a forklift truck – ‘Get a grip’

## WHAT HAPPENED

An employee was carrying out a task using a forklift truck when he exited the cab forward facing, rather than backwards, and without maintaining three points of contact. He had placed his right hand on the grab handle and right foot on the lower step, when his right foot slipped off the step and landed on a wooden baton, twisting his right ankle.

The image below shows an operator exiting a cab forwards without using 3 points of contact.



Our colleague was taken to the local hospital, where tendon damage to his right ankle was diagnosed, resulting in a lost time injury (LTI).

### KEY FINDINGS

**Supervision** - No continuous supervision in the yard to reinforce the STEP IN culture whenever unsafe behaviours increase the risk of injury.

**Access and egress from forklift truck** - Need to exit fork truck backwards, maintaining three points of contact, not followed despite Operator being aware of “Get a Grip” Safety Essential.

**Safe system of work** - Risk assessments and safe systems of work were reviewed within the last 12 months; however, they had not been discussed with Operatives and did not highlight the risk of egressing mobile plant in a forward manner.

**Process** - The production process requires the operator of the forklift truck to exit the vehicle for every lift, where there are timbers present, exposing the operator to trip hazards.

**Housekeeping** - The area was clear and well maintained

## LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

## HOW COULD THIS HAVE BEEN AVOIDED

- Having adequate supervision / leadership assigned to the yard operation.
- Follow the Safety Essentials and eliminate unsafe behaviours.
- Review of production process to identify further opportunities for risk reduction.
- Position timbers in-between forklift truck wheels, eliminating trip hazards when exiting forklift truck.

## KEY REVIEW POINTS

- Ensure sufficient supervision
- Share learning points with the team via a toolbox talk
- Update and communicate revised safe system of work
- Review of production processes
  
- Reinforce the need for everyone to follow the Safety Essentials and STEP IN if any unsafe behaviours are observed.
  
- Undertake a holistic review of local incident trends, considering if any common actions are identified which further reduce the potential for future injuries.

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**LOCATION:** READYMIX OR MORTAR PLANT  
**ACTIVITY:** ACCESS & EGRESS & WORKING AT HEIGHT  
**SUB ACTIVITY:** N/A

**ALERT STATUS:** Normal  
**DATE ISSUED:** 20/12/2023 16:28:42  
**INCIDENT No:** 03688