Company Fined For Forklift Fatality

An Ontario supplier of oil purification systems has been fined $90,000, plus a 25 percent victim fine surcharge, regarding an occupational fatality. Filtervac International Inc. of Breslau, ON, pleaded guilty in the Ontario Court of Justice to failing to ensure that a forklift was operated only by a worker authorized to drive it.

On March 28, 2005, a worker was using a large forklift to move a fabric bag containing clay that had been removed from filter cylinders. The forklift tipped over onto the driver's side and the worker jumped from the forklift and tried to outrun it as it tipped.

The worker was struck on the head and crushed by the forklift's roll cage, a structure that protects a forklift operator if the machine rolls over.

An Ontario Ministry of Labour investigation found that the worker had not been trained in the use of a forklift and was not authorized to drive it. A company rule stating that only trained workers be allowed to operate forklifts was not being enforced.

The worker who died had used a forklift on previous occasions. Court heard that the forklift struck a curb, causing it to tilt toward the driver's side. The bag swung on the forks and the machine then tipped over.