Fan Falls on Worker

A 32-year-old man was killed when a 1500-lb (735 kg) wind machine fan fell on him. He and a helper were unloading the fan from a truck with a hydraulic lift gate.

The fan was mounted on a cart with brakes on the front wheels. The plan was to put the front wheels on the hydraulic tailgate, lock the brakes and lower the gate gently until the cart rolled onto it. The helper moved the fan until the victim, standing on the ground, reached up to grab the fan to help control it.

When the front wheels rolled onto the gate, the helper locked the brakes. But the tailgate had a slant, and the weight of the fan carried it over the edge. The co-worker yelled to the victim, who tried to get out of the way.

Witnesses said the man’s feet slipped from under him. He fell prone, and the fan fell on his head. Paramedics arrived in four minutes but the victim had neither pulse nor respiration.

- Make sure to handle materials properly. The loaders did not have complete control of the massive weight, and controlling it from the ground was impossible.
- Develop a standard plan for handling regular loads, and don’t deviate from it. It may cause a short delay to wait for proper equipment, but it won’t kill you.

Source: California Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report 95CA004