Head injuries kill truck driver

A 34-year-old male truck driver was killed when he was hit by a load of laminated veneer beams falling from a forklift.

The trucker, employed by a wood products company, was helping a forklift operator load a unit of four laminated veneer support beams, weighing a total of 750 pounds, onto a flat-bed trailer.

The victim was standing on top of the trailer in front of the moving unit, guiding the forklift operator. When the operator began tipping the forklift mast and sliding the unit onto the trailer, one end of the unit slid off the forks first and hit the beams that had already been loaded on the trailer.

The impact caused the unit to bounce and swing rapidly toward the victim. The victim was struck by the load which caused him to fall off the trailer. His head was then crushed by the load.

Emergency medical services and the local police department were called to the scene and found the victim unresponsive with a massive head injury. The medical examiner was called, arrived at the site, and pronounced the victim dead at the scene.

Safety officials investigating the accident made recommendations about forklift training and procedures. They also said companies should require workers to wear head protection (hardhat) when assisting with loading or performing any tasks with a potential for head injury.