

CSI Country Wide Case Study Safety Strategy Discussion

Construction Safety Investigator

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Instructions

The objective of this tool is to provide field supervisors with information to proactively engage workers and discuss safety related concerns that they may encounter. Safety discussions should not be limited to the subject above and should pertain to the activities that workers will be involved in that may have the potential for safety related exposures.

Case Day:

April 2010

Accident Type:

Material Handling Accident - Struck By Falling Load

Relevant laws, rules and codes may include:

29CFR 1926.20(a)(1), 1926.21(b)(2)

Case:

A worker was seriously injured when pinned and crushed by a falling load.

Accident Detail:

Workers on a project were directed to relocate rebar no longer needed at one location to a designated lay down yard. An equipment operator and two workers utilized an all-terrain forklift to transport the rebar in two bundles.

Once the forklift was loaded and transported to the yard, the operator stopped in front of previously unloaded rebar. One of the workers acted as a flagman, signaling the operator to extend the forks over the rebar already at the location in position to be unloaded. With the forks extended, the worker (flagman) moved around the previously unloaded rebar to another location in front of but a short distance from the forklift's load. The worker (flagman) then signaled to the operator where to unload the rebar.

After signaling to the operator, the worker (flagman) moved toward the forklift to remove cribbing located on top of the load. As he reached for the cribbing, the operator began to unload the rebar by tilting the forks downward; this caused both rebar bundles to slide. When the worker saw the rebar sliding toward him, he attempted to back up, tripping on debris and falling backward to the ground. The first bundle of rebar then fell on the worker's legs, pinning and crushing them under the load, followed by the second bundle, which fell onto the previously unloaded rebar and the worker.

Reconstructive Safety Evaluation:

- What are some of the possible causes of the accident being discussed?
- What actions could have been taken that might have prevented this accident from occurring?

Accident Scene Conclusion:

The investigation revealed that the worker signaling the operator had not performed this type of task before and had not been trained in proper signaling. When the worker (flagman) directed the operator where to drop the load, he then moved forward toward the forklift to remove the cribbing, which placed him out of the operator’s view and in potential contact with the load. The worker should have removed the cribbing before signaling the operator to drop the load.

Preventive Safety Measures Include:

- All operations are pre-planned using a Job Safety Task Analysis (JSTA) to ensure potential safety hazards associated with an operation are identified and appropriate steps are taken to eliminate or control them.
- Workers are not tasked with directing a crane or other material handing operation if not trained in proper signaling.
- Workers are made aware of potential pinch points, struck-by and caught between hazards of the operation they are assigned to perform.
- Operators are trained and instructed to stop further movement of equipment unless all workers are visibly clear and away from potential contact with the load.

Attendance Roster

Reference: This case is fictitious, and any resemblance to any persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. However, the type of accident described in this case summary happens all too often on construction sites.

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