

Case 100. 19-year-old janitor was killed when he became pinned between the mast of a Hyster Model H90XLS powered industrial truck and a dumpster.

On May 20, 2005, a 19-year-old janitor was killed when he became pinned between the mast of a Hyster Model H90XLS powered industrial truck and a dumpster. The employee had successfully emptied three other garbage hoppers into the trash compacting dumpster prior to attempting to empty the fourth hopper. Each of the hoppers have slightly different release mechanisms. The fourth hopper was also larger than the other three hoppers with a measurement of 56 inches across the back, 65 inches front to back, and 48 inches from the base of the frame to the top of the hopper. The hopper release has a safety catch which falls between the release bar and the catch requiring manual movement to reseal the catch. The fourth hopper was approximately half full when the employee was discovered by a co-worker. The powered industrial truck ignition key was in the on position, the gear selector was in drive, and the parking brake was in the released position. The mast of the powered industrial truck was approximately in the central upright position provided by the movement cylinders. The forks were just off the ground with the hopper against the trash compacting dumpster. An employee in the Fabrication building glanced out the overhead door and saw the employee pinned between the mast and the hopper. When he realized the decedent was bleeding, he ran back into the building to get the foreman. The foreman called 911. According to the firm Service Manager and the Parts Manager, the propane on the powered industrial truck would have had to have run out prior to the incident due to the amount of torque generated by the transmission. The powered industrial truck would have pushed the hopper into the dumpster and against the mast had the unit been running when the employee got down to reseal the catch because of the amount of torque. Information was acquired that indicated that on this model of Hyster powered industrial trucks, when the engine is not running, the transmission pressure pump is not energized, and this causes the pressure on the clutch plate to release. Even with the gear selector in drive or reverse, the powered industrial truck would be in a neutral mode because of there being no pressure on the clutch plate. As no one saw the incident occur, what actually happened is subject to conjecture. Apparently the decedent dumped his load, backed the truck up, ran out of gas, got off the truck to situate the dumpster, and it moved on him as he reached for the latch to reseal the catch. The truck was situated on a three percent incline.

MIOSHA issued the following 1 Serious and 1 Other citations:

Serious:

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, PART 21, RULE 2154(1).
Provide valid operator permit for powered industrial truck operators.

There was inadequate training in that that the firm failed to ensure that the employee set the parking brake on the powered industrial truck before dismounting.

Other:

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS, PART 21, RULE 2171(1).

Ensure that at the start of each shift, the operator of a powered industrial truck or a qualified employee shall perform daily checks of the equipment.

There were no daily checks of the powered industrial trucks.