

# **SafetyToolboxTalks**

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## **Stay in the Cockpit**

In Michigan a 25-year-old male forklift operator was injured when his head was caught in the lowering mast of the forklift he was operating. He was working on the shipping dock operating a industrial forklift. He was assisting two coworkers and a dock supervisor in unloading pallets from a tractor-trailer parked in a shipping bay.

As he backed from the trailer with two pallets on the forks, one of the employees noticed that there was no shipping paperwork on top of the upper pallet. The decedent lowered the load, then backed up and lifted the top pallet approximately three to four feet above the lower pallet. The shipping paperwork was on the top of the lower pallet. The driver could not see the shipping label from a seated position. He placed his left foot on the brake, stood up, and leaned forward, placing his head through the mast of the forklift to read the label.

As he leaned forward, his right leg pressed the mast up/down control lever forward. His thigh pushed the lever forward and the mast lowered. His head and neck were caught by the crossbar of the lowering mast. He died 12 days later.

This is a good reminder why we must keep all our body parts within the confines of the forklift when we are operating it.