



July 28 — Never Trust a Load to Stay Still

I was operating the forklift flipping a piece of 12 inch pipe to be welded. An employee had his hand on the jack stand, and the strap was rolled on the pipe. The pipe could possibly fall and smashed his hand in between itself and the jack stand.

I shut the forklift down, stopped the job explaining the hazard to the employee told him what the repercussions would be. If he kept his hand, there in the pipe fell on it. He said he understood apologize and we move forward with our job.

Heavy materials don't have to fall far...

They only have to move far enough to hurt someone.

While rotating a 12-inch pipe into position with a forklift, an employee rested their hand on a nearby jack stand while the pipe remained supported by a lifting strap. Although everything appeared stable, any unexpected movement could have trapped the employee's hand between the pipe and the stand.

Before the lift continued, the hazard was recognized and the employee moved to a safe location. The crew used the opportunity to discuss staying out of pinch points anytime a load is suspended, supported, or being repositioned.

When we're focused on lining up material, it's easy to rest a hand on nearby equipment or reach into an area without thinking about what could happen if the load shifts. Even a small movement from a heavy object can generate enough force to cause a serious injury.

Before every lift or repositioning task, ask yourself:

"If this moves unexpectedly, where will my hands and body be?"

Hazards

- Pinch points
- Line of fire
- Suspended and supported loads
- Crushed hand and finger injuries
- Unexpected load movement
- Material handling hazards

Words of Wisdom

Never place your hands where heavy material can move unexpectedly. Stay out of the line of fire, expect the unexpected, and let proper tools—not your hands—control the load.

Pause and Think

- Where are pinch points commonly found when positioning heavy materials?
- Have you ever caught yourself resting a hand on equipment while focusing on another task?
- Why is it dangerous to assume a suspended or supported load won't move?
- What can crews do to remind one another to stay out of the line of fire?
- Before moving a load, do you stop and ask, **"Where will my hands be if this shifts?"**

Closing Thought

Heavy materials don't give warnings before they move. Keep your hands clear, stay out of the line of fire, and never place yourself where one unexpected shift can change your life.