



Making the Case for Florescent Vest Protection in Lift Machine Environments.

Activity related injury statistics quantify and compare types of injuries for frequency, severity and causes in environments wherein accidents occur, toward several conclusions. For example, injuries in a sport like basketball may be far more frequent relative to numbers of participants than, say, technical mountaineering. In the case of the later, however, if we use the data to evaluate the overall numbers injuries vs how many of those result in life-changing trauma or death, over 300 mountaineers have died on Mount Everest alone. In that light, pursuing basketball instead might invite a second look as the less “likely lethal” threat.

In our lines of work, minor to serious injuries to backs, extremities, and joints are by the far most common. Far rarer are injuries that involve forklifts, scissor and snorkel lifts, entanglements wherein life changing trauma or death are statistically far more likely than work related injuries that don’t involve these machines.

Lift injuries of every kind usually require two criteria: The operator’s attention is focused on an operational point of view that doesn’t “see” the potential victim, and, coincidentally, the soon-be-injured isn’t aware or is surprised by his proximity to the machine.

Fork and scissor lifts are heavy, and their hard tires can crush a steel toe shoe, and utterly destroy a foot protected by anything less; rear steering means the tips of a forklift changing direction exponentially accelerates the sweep the fork tips, and can destroy any body or part that happens to be in the sweep of the arc. A JLG basket lowering on top of or laterally impacting a worker on left or right can easily be catastrophically injurious and has been.

I’ve written or edited and relayed several articles like this about precautions drivers and workers can take to mitigate the possibility worker-machine entanglements. We like to think these measures have been effective, but there is no way to know for sure. What we can do is revisit every potential hazard—including machine / worker entanglements—again and again, and

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see if there is a concept, behavior, precaution or device that can potentially reduce the “opportunity” for machine vs worker injury, even if by a marginal amount. We can then do our best to incorporate any “return on investment” measure that may potentially deliver a safer end.

Last month. UTP’s WCF liaison, Gary Fian, observed that workers in virtually every trade that includes potentials for machine vs worker encounters, workers are compelled to wear at least lightweight, fluorescent/reflective vests to improve contrast and noticeability against whatever background. In response, Lonnie ask me to write something to this affect, and make the case for florescent / reflective vests for those willing wear them.

As mentioned, the case is already made, as vests are well established in every trade wherein motorized equipment and pedestrians share the field. Everyone has noticed while driving in daylight—and surely at night—the starkly noticeable contrast between pedestrians and bicyclists regaled in chartreuse, “construction orange” and ideally “reflective” clothing and those who are not. Consequently, there are innumerable examples of drivers who “didn’t see” their victims, and who may have been preventively aware had the victim been wearing bright, contrasting attire.

Extending this logic into UTP’s workplace conditions, there isn’t rationale for our work force not seriously consider a light, compactable inexpensive fluorescent vest an integral part of his or her standard personal protection equipment (PPE) system.

Here’s an example of a suitable vest available online for \$8.00, you can cut and paste into the Amazon search bar to find out more:

Neiko 53941A High Visibility Safety Vest, Large, Neon Yellow

Ever in the quest for a safer union, UTP respectfully requests that its members join the rest of the trades and adopt the Florescent Vest option as standard SOP. No question those that start this initiative will stand out in the starkest contrast, but hey—that’s pretty much the point. Right?!

For Safety,

Ladd Anderson, UTP Director of Risk Management.

Utpgroup.com

Have you checked out the links for ideas of where you can buy your PPE? Also; if you would like to purchase Sketchers steel toed boots you can do so with a 30% discount via the link on our site.

A Tale of our accidents

The following is a list of incidents and accidents that have occurred since our last newsletter.

Arizona: Gammage Theater-While pushing a double stacked hamper into the pit; it hit something, and the plywood top was knocked out of place crushing the right hand.

Utah: Eccles Theatre - While lifting a solarflame light the employee twisted and pulled a muscle away from their ribs.

Eccles Theatre #2 - While cutting ¼” cables the employee strained their shoulder.

Vivint Arena - While unloading a truck there was a cart full of stanchions coming down the lift gate. The gate snagged and caused the cart to fall and hit him. He turned away and it hit him in the back and knocked him over.

California: Greek Theatre - While unloading trucks the employee went to pull on a video wall. It was not secured properly and came away much faster than expected and the employee lost balance and fell hitting their head and back.

Orange Street Fair - While cutting tape off cable ramps with a knife they tugged on a tough piece and the tugging hand slipped to the knife causing a laceration requiring stitches.

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While personal protective equipment cannot eliminate accidents entirely; it can minimize the damage done when those accidents do occur. If you go back and read through the accidents that have happened just this year alone; anyone can see where personal protective equipment could have minimized the severity of the injury. The cost of purchasing PPE is very minor when compared to the devastating results of some accidents. What are your fingers and toes worth to you? How would you make a living if you were unable to continue in the same line of work because of an accident?

Faulty Equipment

When there is faulty equipment on your job please take a picture of the hazard and submit it to UTP Productions.

Particularly if there is an incident involved with that equipment.

Examples would include the broken wheel on the case that ran over a stagehands toe or the video wall that was improperly secured in the truck.

If we receive these pictures, then we can take steps to make the workplace a much safer place for all of us.



Safety mindfulness should be the first piece of PPE that you put on when at the worksite.