

Three-point technique

by Patric E. McCon

Before you begin

This talk is appropriate for forklift operators, truck drivers and operators of other equipment. For demonstration purposes, please have a piece of mobile equipment available to help make your discussion more effective.



Introduction

Slips trips and falls account for 20 percent of work injuries. This totals 13 million injuries per year. Climbing into and out of mobile equipment presents a common exposure to slips and falls. Inclement weather, greasy or broken steps, grab handles and the rush of the work day make this a serious exposure.

Discussion

The three-point technique is a simple and effective way to minimize the risk of falling. Use this technique if you are entering the cab of a forklift, climbing onto the bed of a truck or climbing into/onto any other piece of equipment.

When you are climbing, at least three limbs should always be in contact with the equipment. This could be two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand. Of course, to use this technique the climber must be facing the equipment. You cannot have three points of contact if you are jumping off or sliding out of the seat.

Before you enter the equipment, place any objects on the seat – log books, production schedules, bar-code scanners, etc. Do the same when you exit. Leave the objects on the seat until you are off the equipment. In addition, make sure you look before you exit.

Other points to remember, include:

- Wear footwear appropriate to the job;
- Keep the steps and grab rails clean;
- Make sure the lights are working so you can see where you are climbing;
- Do not use the steering wheel or control handles as handholds.

Action items

- To reinforce the lesson, ask each participant to demonstrate the three-point technique.
- Your equipment supplier, trade association or insurance company may have three-point contact stickers to apply to your equipment. These will serve as helpful reminders.
- Encourage employees to remind each other to safely mount and dismount equipment.

Summary

Most slip and fall injuries are minor. However, 15,000 people die each year as a result of these incidents. Old habits are hard to break, but properly climbing onto and off of mobile equipment may prevent you from becoming a slip and fall statistic.

References

Publications

Falls from Vehicles in the General Trucking Industry (Washington State): <http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety/topics/atoz/injuryfs/pdfs/fallfromvehicle.pdf>

Preventing Injuries and Deaths from Skid Steer Loaders (NIOSH): <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/skidalt.html>

Patric McCon is a certified safety professional, certified fire protection specialist and a certified hazardous materials manager. He is a senior risk engineering consultant for a major international insurance company. In this position, he provides safety and fire-protection consulting services to insured customers throughout North America. His specialty is manufacturing industries. In addition, he has 38 years of experience as a part-time firefighter/emergency medical technician, and he works part-time for the Hiram Fire Department.

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