

Fall restraints on order picking forklifts

What is the problem?

Workers falling from order-picking forklift trucks (order pickers) while exiting the cabin onto pallets, partially enclosed platforms or racking.

What are the risks?

If an order picker does not have a platform or uses platforms that allow access into racking, workers are at risk of serious fall injuries if they exit the cabin.

If lanyards or inertia reels are too long, a fall from an order picker can result in workers being suspended below the order picker or within the racking. This can cause the 'pendulum effect', where workers can swing into an obstruction such as the racking or the order picker mast. This puts workers at risk of fall arrest injuries (eg a serious jolt) or other injuries such as fractures.

The harness, lanyard or inertia reel line can also be damaged by coming into contact with sharp corners of the order picker or racking. This can result in harness or lanyard failure and a serious fall injury to the worker.

What is a solution to the problem?

Order pickers require workers to wear harnesses and lanyards at all times.

The risk of falls can also be eliminated or reduced by:

- not allowing workers to walk onto pallets attached to order pickers
- using a fully enclosed platform
- ensuring workers do not leave the order picker to access racking
- only using the order picker in narrow racking aisles that are decked or have pallets on each beam. This reduces the risk of workers falling from the side of the partially enclosed platform

- restricting the length of the lanyard or inertia reel line to prevent workers from falling off the platform
- moving the order picker close to where the goods are located to limit the length of the lanyard or reel line
- decreasing the depth of the pallet racking to limit the length of the lanyard
- ensuring the harness, lanyard or inertia reel combinations have a personal energy absorber to prevent a sudden fall arrest injury
- ensuring the angle between the block and the worker is within the designer's specifications, when using an inertia reel
- ensuring the fall arrest line does not contact edges, when using an inertia reel
- ensuring the block does not hit the worker's head, when using an inertia reel
- using a wire as a lanyard to reduce the risk of the line cutting if a fall occurs.

Each worker must hold a current licence for operating an order picker and must understand and be capable of demonstrating safe operation of the order picker, harness, lanyard and inertia reel. Licensed workers should not be permitted to operate the machine unless properly trained and supervised. Records of provided training should be kept.

Further Information

WorkSafe Advisory Service

Toll-free: 1800 136 089

Email: info@worksafe.vic.gov.au

worksafe.vic.gov.au

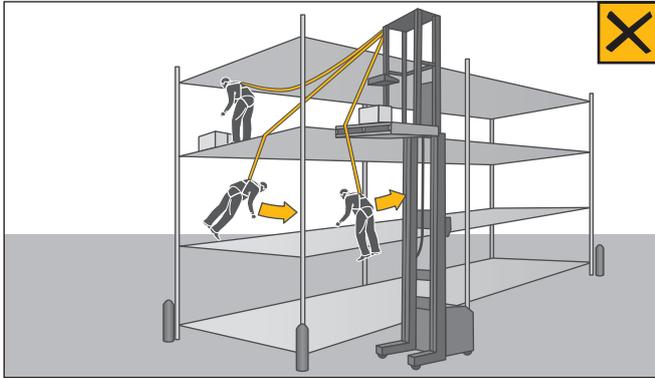
Australian Standard

AS/NZ 1891 – Part 1 2007 – Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices

(Health and Safety Solution continued overleaf.)

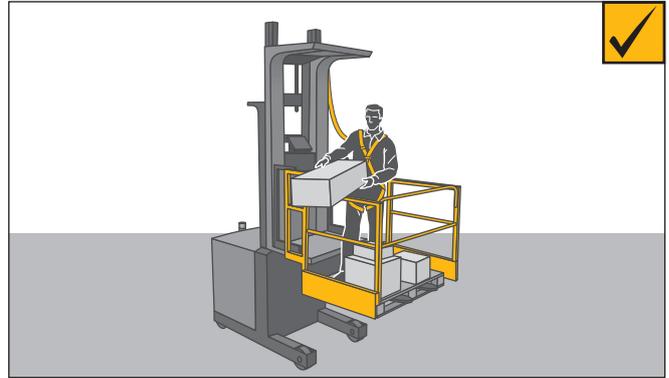
A Health and Safety Solution

The problem



A lanyard or inertia reel that is too long can result in the 'pendulum effect'.

The solution



A fully enclosed platform can prevent falls from an order picker.