

# SAFETY ALERT

## 361 - Forklift Interaction with Moving Vehicle

### Incident

A forklift operator was transporting a long piece of timber freight measuring approximately 5.5 metres in length within a designated loading zone. The task involved manoeuvring the load into position for placement onto a stationary semi-trailer.

At the time of the operation, there was a second semi-trailer positioned adjacent to the loading area. Both vehicles were initially stationary. While the forklift operator was manoeuvring through a narrow space between the two semi-trailers, one of the semi-trailers unexpectedly moved forward approximately 1–2 metres. This was not the trailer being actively loaded.

As a result of this unexpected movement, the rear passenger-side wheel of the moving semi-trailer ran over the timber freight, causing damage to the load.

When the forklift operator commenced the manoeuvre, the truck driver was not in the vehicle cabin. Subsequently, the driver entered the cabin and moved the vehicle without checking surrounding conditions, despite forklift operations occurring within the designated loading zone.

No injuries were reported; however, the incident had the potential for serious harm given the interaction between mobile plant and heavy vehicles in a tight space.

### Safety Issues

- Forklift Operating in tight space with long load
- Unexpected movement of the truck, forklift operator was not expecting the truck to move, as they thought the driver was not in the cabin
- Truck Driver did not follow the traffic management procedure on site including failing to conduct adequate surrounding checks prior to vehicle movement and the non-movement of trucks whilst forklifts are in operation within the designated loading zone (In Yellow)
- Rushing to complete work, taking shortcuts
- Lack of communication between mobile plant and vehicle operator
- Limited visibility of the working area, by forklift operator



### RECOMMENDED WAYS TO CONTROL RISK

- Always ensure communication between forklift operators and vehicle drivers before working around or near a trailer or truck.
- Confirm that trucks are parked, secured, and immobilised (brakes applied, keys removed) before operating equipment around them where applicable.
- Avoid operating forklifts in constrained spaces unless clear controls and visibility are maintained.
- Maintain situational awareness, assume that unsecured vehicles may move unexpectedly.
- Use spotters when handling oversized or long loads in restricted areas.

For more information contact [safety@programmed.com.au](mailto:safety@programmed.com.au)  
Date of Issue: 17/03/2026

**Report all incidents and near misses**

Please display on Safety Noticeboards and raise this matter at the next Toolbox Talk or Safety Meeting.