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INCIDENT ALERT

A laborer foreman was assisting a truck driver with loading a trench shoring device on a flatbed crane equipped truck. The device weighed approximately 1000 pounds. The driver had lifted it onto the truck using the crane and laid it down on its side, but it was not positioned squarely on the bed. The driver was attempting to use a 4’ long pry bar to shift the box but found he could not. He asked the foreman to push on the box while he lifted with the pry bar. As the foreman was pushing, he felt a “pop” in his lower left leg. After shift, he had his wife pick him up at the job site and drive to a clinic near his house for examination. The doctor diagnosed a muscle strain, but asked the foreman to return in a week for a follow-up examination. Upon re-examination it was discovered he had suffered a tear to his left Achilles tendon. He was told not to return to work pending surgery.

LESSONS LEARNED

First, and foremost, when the load was being lifted onto the truck it should have been positioned properly. This point calls into question the training and capability of the crane operator. Proper rigging and lifting allows a load to be controlled and placed in the appropriate position. Additionally, the use of a tag line can help control the load and place it where it needs to be in order to be safely transported. Second, a task plan should have been developed and reviewed. Activities that may result in soft tissue injuries should be identified and addressed. Lastly, workers should never transport themselves to a doctor for treatment. Doing so creates a potentially dangerous situation if the worker suffers complications on the way to the doctor.

Foremen are the first line of effort to assure a safe and healthful workplace. When they demonstrate their lack of knowledge or a willingness to cut corners in order to get the job done fast, they reinforce the same type of activity among their co-workers.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about how train the foremen on their jobs. Ask how they assure that the foremen are setting the proper example for all other workers on the job. Ask about their expectations for using proper material handling equipment when moving heavy objects. Do they just plan on “man-handling” it or do they plan on using material handling equipment in order to make sure people are not overextending themselves?

2. Watch for activities that may result in similar injuries during your walkthrough. Are workers attempting to move extremely heavy objects without the proper equipment? Are foremen reinforcing that type of activity? Are the foremen on the job setting the RIGHT example for their workers? Have they planned their task?

3. Share this Incident Alert with your contractor and ask them to share it with their workers.

Distribution:
All CPO Staff

REV. (DATE)