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INCIDENT ALERT

A mover and his co-worker were in the process of moving a large table into a 4th floor storage area. The movers had been using an old freight elevator to get to the space. The table had been dismantled and last section being moved was a support beam measuring approximately 17½ feet long. The elevator they were using was 12 feet long and the section would not fit. The workers managed to get the section into the elevator by placing one end of the beam in a bottom corner of the elevator, then holding the other end above the door gate. They decided one worker would hold the end up as they transported it to the upper floor. As they were passing the 3rd floor the end being held up struck the elevator shaft wall. The beam bent, then snapped, and one end struck one of the workers in the head lacerating him and knocking him out for a short period of time. An ambulance was summoned and he was transported to a local emergency room where he received stitches. He stayed at the hospital for further diagnosis and observation and was released later that evening.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the investigation several issues were identified. First, the workers decided to haul the beam in an elevator that was not large enough for the load. The elevator had been installed in the building in the 1930’s and was of a design that would allow material to extend beyond the car and into the elevator shaft. This is what allowed the workers to place the beam in the car to begin with. Second, the workers had decided one would hold the beam up while the car was moving. A better choice could have been to support the beam with cribbing. The workers could then have walked up the steps to receive the load at the upper floor and would not have been in the elevator with the load. Third, a larger elevator was located on the opposite side of the building and the workers could have used that elevator for transporting the beam.

The workers, in their effort to complete the job quickly, did not take the time to fully survey the area and evaluate the potential hazards associated with the move. Thoughtful evaluation of the work, perhaps in the form of task planning, could have helped prevent this injury. Lastly, NEVER extend any material or body part outside a powered lift or elevator when it is in motion.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Talk with your contractor about how they manage training for the use of powered personnel lifts. Ask them how site elevators are managed during construction projects. Ask how they assure that third tier contractors are informed of their requirements and expectations.

2. Watch for activities that could result in similar situations as you walk through your job site. Are workers keeping all body parts and materials within the confines of the powered lifts they are operating?
3. Share this Incident Alert with your contractor and ask them to share it with their workers.

Distribution:
All CPO Staff