



## ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ALERT

No. 20, September 2006

# Truck driver's head crushed in container lifter accident

### INCIDENT

A 50-year-old truck driver died when he was preparing his truck and container lifter to transport a container of hides.

His head was trapped and crushed between the footplate of the forward hydraulic stabiliser leg and the base of the main body of the stabiliser leg.

The victim was releasing a lifting chain from the front driver's side corner of the container with his left hand while holding the remote control unit for the container lifter in his right hand. It would appear he inadvertently pressed a button on the remote control unit that activated the front stabiliser leg. The stabiliser leg retracted to meet the base of the stabiliser arm and his head was crushed between the two points.

### CIRCUMSTANCES

The victim had gone to a pelt processing company to pick up a container load of hides for transport to the Port of Napier. He had successfully loaded the filled 19.2 tonne container onto the back of his truck an Iveco, model MP4300, manufactured in 2005, using a mounted container lifter, make: 'Swinglift', model: HC 40/20, also manufactured in 2005.

The victim was an experienced operator of the Swinglift and had trained others in its use.

When the stabiliser arms are extended from the deck of the truck onto the ground, a container can be lifted on or off the deck of a truck using a remote control unit. Lifting chains are attached to each bottom corner of the ends of the container and are suspended from the top jibs of the front and rear modules of the Swinglift. Raising and lowering of the top jib allows the container to be raised or lowered.

With the truck engine running, no sound can be heard from the stabiliser leg moving to the closed position and it moves rapidly.

### INVESTIGATION

The investigation revealed that the container lifter and remote control unit to operate it were functioning correctly.

Had the deceased put the remote to one side prior to attempting to remove the lifting chain from the corner of the container, this accident would not have occurred.

### ACTIONS TAKEN

The company that owns the Swinglift design have implemented some solutions:

- An audible alarm has been fitted to the stabiliser leg controls and is activated when the stabiliser leg is moving. These have been fitted to new machines.
- A warning label has been manufactured and is affixed to the base of the mainframe next to the twist locks and

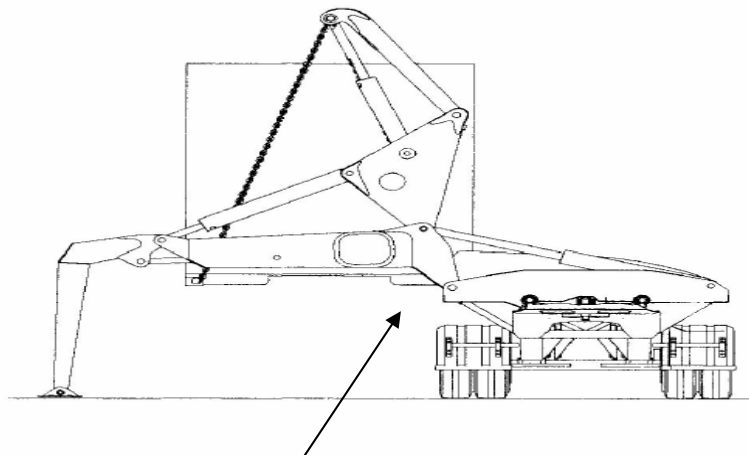
close to the entrapment point: **DANGER – KEEP CLEAR WHILE OPERATING.**

- The company has contacted all owners of the Swinglift to alert them to the accident.
- The operator should wear a pouch to accommodate the remote. Placing the remote in the pouch will prevent operation when doing other tasks.
- The operator's manual has been altered under the section on 'Safety' to include

the following: "The operator of the remote control unit is to maintain a safe distance from all parts of the Swinglift operation. The operator should turn off and pouch the remote safely before entering the area".

### RECOMMENDATION

Other manufacturers of container lifters should follow similar actions to those outlined above.



Arrow shows where the foot retracts to the base of the stabiliser arm.

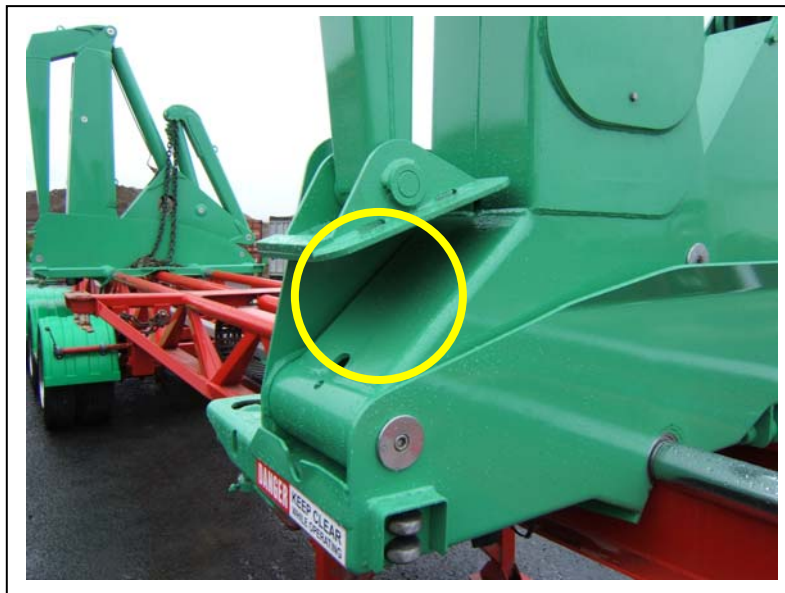


Photo showing the foot in the closed position against the base of the stabiliser arm.