

Unloading Wrist Injury

Situation: EHS received an Incident Report via email from an employee. An investigation was conducted by an EHS Safety Specialist.

A 1500 lb piece of equipment was being unloaded from a semi-truck in the fire zone. The normal procedure is that when items are being unloaded from a truck, UNM employees are not to assist until the items are on the ground. Once the items reach the doorway, the driver is then no longer allowed to assist. The driver had no assistance on this day, and the employee offered to assist. The two of them were only using a pallet jack. The employee reported that the driver began to move the crate without telling him, and when he reflexively moved his hands, his wrist bent, causing an injury, and he received a laceration from the metal binding on the crate. He was treated at EOHS, given a brace for his wrist, and states no follow-up appointments are required.

The EHS staff member met with the employee at the location. The employee reported there is no written policy for the procedure described above. This is also not a task he normally performs. He admits the reason he did not get more people to assist was because the driver seemed to be in a hurry and getting irritated. He stated there is a forklift available, but it was in storage, and he is not currently certified by UNM to use it. He was able to get 2 more people to assist after he was injured.

Causes:

1. Human error (rushing)
2. Lack of written or enforced policy for this type of procedure
3. Insufficient training
4. Insufficient planning for known hazards
5. Insufficient supervision
6. Lack of communication.

Corrective Action: Memo to department heads outlining the investigation and conclusions.

Prevention:

1. Create a written policy or procedure for unloading trucks that clarifies what role(s) staff are responsible for during each step of the process.
2. Train staff on procedure.

3. The Special Activities Department can be contacted for assistance with moving heavy items.
4. Ergonomic training.

References:

[Ergonomics :: Environmental Health and Safety | The University of New Mexico \(unm.edu\)](#)