

## Unsafe Access and Falls from Height whilst Storing and Manipulating Cylinders

A recent incident which occurred when an employee used unsafe access methods once again highlights the dangers of working at height, even when at fairly low levels above ground.

An operator needed to check and scan the barcodes on cylinders located in a pallet next to a wall in a storage warehouse. Some of the barcodes were not accessible from the front of the pallet, so the operator climbed up onto the cylinder rolling ramp of the pallet which was in its vertical position and leaned over the pallet securing bar. The operator then lost balance and fell onto his side, impacting the lifting eyebolt of the pallet which resulted in two fractured ribs.



This is not an uncommon event but illustrates that even with everyday tasks, consideration for personal safety is always required. In this case a poor decision by the operator to use an easy but unsafe access method resulted in a fall from height.

### Conclusions on these types of incidents

- Poor hazard awareness, lack of operational discipline and potentially (self-imposed) time pressure can be human related factors to easily avoidable incidents.
- If the access to the rear barcode labels is difficult, safer methods should be employed.
- Site storage issues also can feature in these incidents and should be addressed by planning suitable cylinder storage and access.

**Some corrective and precautionary measures could include:**

- Review the storage lay for assessing the risk when scanning of cylinder labels
- Amend the pallet loading procedures to include a requirement that all barcode labels face towards the front of the pallet.
- If pallets are stored with limited access schedule scanning operations before their inaccessible position
- Handling aids, such as a forklift or pallet truck, to move the pallet in and out of position could be used so that barcodes can be scanned
- Provide a suitable means of access if staff needs to work at height, even low levels, and ensure that it is routinely checked, in good condition, and users are trained in its use.
- Consider using multiple barcode labels on cylinders.
- Use workplace observations to ensure procedural compliance is achieved, and challenge unsafe behaviour when encountered.

**In any case, NEVER CLIMB ON PALLETS****References**

Unless otherwise specified, the latest edition shall apply.

EIGA SI-HF13– *Organisation – “Human Reliability”*, [www.eiga.eu](http://www.eiga.eu).

EIGA SI-HF11– *Organisation – “Safety Culture”*, [www.eiga.eu](http://www.eiga.eu).

EIGA SI-HF4– *Task – “Design and Effectiveness of Procedures”*, [www.eiga.eu](http://www.eiga.eu).

EIGA SI-10 *Safe Handling of cylinders*, [www.eiga.eu](http://www.eiga.eu).

EIGA Document 23.11 *Loading and Transporting Cylinders*, [www.eiga.eu](http://www.eiga.eu).

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