

FATALGRAM 26-02

Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Division of Labor & Safety Standards
Occupational Safety & Health



Date of incident: April 3, 2026

Industry: General Industry

Location: Deadhorse, Alaska

Summary: An oilfield services worker was fatally injured while attempting to dislodge a semi-truck with triple trailers using a heavy-duty powered industrial truck (forklift). The tow-hook on the front of the semi-truck failed under load, recoiling backward through the forklift's windshield and striking the operator.

Description of Accident: A 52-year-old male forklift operator died from internal injuries after being struck in the chest by the semi-truck's front tow-hook. The operator was using a forklift and a tow strap to pull a semi-truck that was still connected to three fully loaded fracking sand trailers. During the towing attempt, the tow-hook sheared from its mounting point due to forces exceeding its rated capacity. The hook and attached tow strap recoiled toward the forklift, penetrated the front windshield, and struck the operator. The combined weight of the semi-truck and fully loaded triple trailers exceeded the tow-hook's design capacity.

Accident Prevention Recommendations:

- Detach trailers from semi-trucks before towing to reduce the total weight and load on tow-points.
- Use a heavy-duty wrecker or appropriate towing equipment when moving loaded semi-trucks or trailers.
- Do not exceed the lifting or towing capacity of forklifts or any towing/lifting attachments.
- Follow manufacturers' recommendations and rated load capacities for all towing attachments and anchorage points.