Safety Alert – Fork Extensions

Introduction

This Safety Alert has been raised following several near miss incidents involving the use of fork extensions fitted to forklifts on site. In all incidents the lynch pin has been forced out of the retaining clip as the forks were either pushed along the ground to pick up a load or pulled back along the ground after a load had been placed.

Once the lynch pin has been removed, if not identified by the operator, the retaining pins will then be vibrated out of the back of the fork extension as the forklift is driven, allowing the fork extensions to slide off the standard forks if they are tilted.

These conditions recently resulted in both fork extensions sliding off the standard forks while they were at height and landing on the ground. On this occasion nobody was injured, but it is easy to see how somebody could be struck by a falling fork extension resulting in serious harm.

Fork Extension Pin Locking System

To eliminate the chance of a similar type of incident from reoccurring on a Hydrock site, the type of fork extension locking system has been reviewed and only the following types of locking systems are permitted to be used on Hydrock Group projects.

The below hierarchy of fork extension locking systems should be applied when purchasing or hiring fork extensions for your projects;

Fork Extension Carriage

The fork extensions carriage has been purchased for the HRCP (Hydrock Plant) owned Merlo forklift. When arranging for this forklift to be delivered to your project, ensure that the fork extensions carriage is delivered with it. The fork extensions carriage allows the complete carriage to be changed over from inside the cab, eliminating the risk of the being able to come loose, come off.

These fork extensions have a SWL of 4.5t, above the SWL of the telehandler, eliminating the requirement to apply a lower SWL held by standard fork extensions.

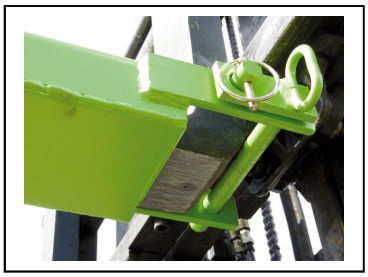
Bolted Retaining Pin

The fork extension retaining pin should be a bolted system which allows the retaining pin (bolt) to be secured with a spanner, removing the risk that contact with the ground can remove pins and enable the pins to come loose / off.

When using this system, as part of the pre-use inspection the bolts and nuts are to be checked to ensure that they are in good order and can be secured tightly. Where damaged bolts or nuts are identified they should be replaced before use.

Only nuts and bolts types which have been examined as part of the Thorough Examination process are permitted to be used.

Vertical Pin System



The vertical pin system reduces the risk of the pin being removed, even when it is damaged by striking the ground. With the pin located in a vertical location the bottom of the pin may be damaged, but this will result in the pin being bent and not removed.

The Lynch Pins should never be replaced with “R” clips or any other type of pin which is non-standard to the pin locking system.

<u>Banned Fork Extension Systems</u>

The below type of fork extension retaining system is no longer to be used on any Hydrock Group project. This system has been proven to allow the Lynch Pins to be removed following contact with the ground during forklift manoeuvres, which then allows the retaining pins to be removed through vibration.