



# Safety alert 05/2013

## Wooden and general-purpose flat pallets

### Background

WorkSafe investigations over the last 12 months into the freight forwarding industry have identified that damaged wooden pallets are a concern. Wooden and other pallets are used in many industries including freight forwarding, transport, retailing and wholesale warehousing. Pallets are often loaded incorrectly and damaged by pallet trucks, forklift trucks and other material handling equipment.

### Contributing factors

- Persons operating forklift trucks do not hold appropriate High Risk Work Licences and have not been trained and deemed competent by the employer.
- Freight on loaded pallets has not been inspected at the time of receipt and dispatch.
- Employees are not being trained on how to identify damaged pallets.
- Persons are not reporting the hazard of a damaged pallet to the employer.

### Action required

1. Workplaces that use pallets need to develop a maintenance program looking at:
  - a. Inspection of pallets at receipt and dispatch.
  - b. Training of employees to identify incorrectly loaded pallets, broken boards, split cross beams and corroded nails etc.
  - c. Reporting of damaged pallets to the appropriate person/employer.
2. Ensure employees hold the required licences and competencies when using forklifts and other pallet lifting devices.

### Further information

- WorkSafe website
- Guidance note: [Working safely with forklifts](#)
- Forklift manufacturers operator's manual for safe operation
- Australian Standard 4762-2000 General-purpose flat pallets
- Australian Standard 2359.2-2013 Powered industrial trucks Part 2: Operations

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