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Standing on a makeshift platform spanning the forks of a lift truck isn’t safe. In California, doing so proved lethal for a 29-year-old worker.

Alejandro Valladares fell headfirst about 30 feet (9.1 meters) into a hole from a plywood platform on a forklift. He had been operating a handheld compactor to push down a piling. The vibration caused Valladares to lose his balance and fall into the deep hole.

Making matters worse was the fact that sandy soil in the hole collapsed onto the worker, leaving only part of one of his legs exposed. It took emergency services workers more than two hours to free his body.

It’s dangerous enough to stand on a platform haphazardly spanning a forklift’s forks, but in this situation the vibration escalated the risk. And the unstable hole was the third hazard that sealed Valladares? fate.

A worker who needs to be in a raised position to perform tasks should be using a properly designed lifting platform, which is firmly secured to the forks and provides guardrails and other safety features. Proper platforms also allow workers to tie themselves off using safety belts.