



Fair, safe and productive workplaces

Labour

HAZARD ALERT

Mobile Shelving Units



Background

An employee sustained fatal injuries when he was crushed between two rows of closing mobile shelving units. Mobile shelving systems are found where there is a need for a large amount of file storage such as libraries and offices.

Hazards

Factors that can lead to accidents involving mobile shelving units include:

- moving mobile shelving units while an aisle is occupied;
- shelving units installed with limited safety devices that allow the carriages to move even though a person is in the aisle; and
- persons moving through aisles while mobile shelving units are being moved.

Controlling and Eliminating the Hazard

One key method to prevent injuries involving mobile shelving units is to have proper safety devices installed when the system is first set up in the workplace. Some of these safety devices are designed to detect obstructions in the path of the moving shelving and to automatically stop the movement if the path is not clear. Such safety devices should also be retrofitted to existing mobile shelving units.

Legislative Requirements

Employers shall ensure that the health and safety of employees using or working in proximity to mobile shelving units is protected. Proactive steps that can be taken include:

- ◆ identify and assess hazards associated with the mobile shelving units
- ◆ implement adequate control measures to address the assessed hazards
- ◆ develop safe work procedures for using and working in proximity to mobile shelving units; and
- ◆ train employees on the safe operation of the mobile shelving units including any manufacturer recommendations intended for the safety of employees operating the mobile shelving units.

Hazard Alerts are messages, notices or warnings for employees, employers and Canadians in general, issued by the Labour Program. They provide information about the risks associated with, for example, the handling of hazardous substances, the presence of toxic products or the use of products or objects. Employers must comply with the minimum standards established by Part II of the *Canada Labour Code* and associated regulations.

For more information, please contact the Employment and Social Development Canada Labour Program office nearest you or visit our website at:

http://www.labour.gc.ca/eng/health_safety/prevention/alerts/index.shtml