

# Forklift Safety

## Safety Toolbox Talks

The safe operation of powered industrial trucks is something that is often taken for granted. But taking anything to do with safety for granted is most unwise. So it's important to review safety practices relating to forklift operation, in order to protect you and your co-workers. Here are basic rules that must be observed:

- Know the maximum load limit of a lift and never permit an overload
- Make sure the load is secure before you move it
- Check your machine thoroughly before starting it and report any malfunctions
- Travel with the fork or pallet only a few (four to six) inches off the floor, and never raise or lower a load while traveling
- Never travel if your view is obstructed
- Keep the load in the front on an upgrade and in the back on a downgrade
- Don't exceed the fixed speed limits
- Never allow others to ride with you
- Never engage in horseplay or "trick" driving
- Follow established traffic patterns, such as four-way stops at intersections
- Sound the horn only when necessary; don't try to frighten pedestrians
- Observe backup rules and make sure the alarm is working
- Don't use forks to align or straighten stacked material
- Don't stand under a load while it's being raised or lowered-or allow anyone else to do so
- When the vehicle is parked, lower the forks, keeping them

as close to the ground as possible

- When refueling your truck, shut the engine off and don't smoke. Remember that batteries should be serviced only in designated areas
- If a powered industrial truck operates on liquefied petroleum gas, the following specific precautions must be taken:
  - Before starting the motor, always check for gas leaks
  - When exchanging fuel containers, do not disconnect the tank until you have shut off the fuel supply. Run the engine to make sure all the system's fuel has been used
  - If the truck is out of use for an extended period of time, close the hand valve and make certain the fuel system is dry
  - Never park the truck near intense heat or flammable materials
  - Don't try to connect the gas tank when gas is escaping from the connecting point. Connections should be performed outdoors if possible

The professionalism of you powered industrial truck operators-the ability to perform your jobs efficiently, alertly, and safely-deserves to be a source of pride. And it will continue to be so as long as you don't let that pride turn into overconfidence, which can threaten the safety of your co-workers and yourselves.

## **Preventing Forklift Accidents**

Working safely with and around forklifts is a two-way street: Operators need to take precautions and pedestrians need to be alert and stay out of the way in order to prevent accidents.

# Forklift Dangers:

- Injuries to pedestrians
- Collisions
- Falling loads
- Tipping over

# Safety Rules for Operators:

Get training on how to operate the forklift.

- Always wear your safety belt and hard hat
- Keep your hands and feet inside the cab
- Always check for pedestrians
- Inspect the forklift daily and report any problems
- Make sure pallets are well-stacked and secured
- Keep loads centered to avoid losing balance
- Keep loads low to the ground when moving-no more than 10 inches high
- Make extra trips instead of overloading
- Know your forklift's capacity and stay within the load limit
- Make sure the forklift you're unloading has been secured to prevent its movement during unloading
- Make sure loads don't obstruct your view
- Use extreme caution when turning
- Move slowly when on wet surfaces
- Keep your forklift in good working order
- Always park on a flat surface away from traffic and set the parking brake
- Never give people a ride on the forklift
- Sound your horn at intersections
- Always lower forks to the ground when parking

# Safety Rules for Pedestrians:

- Work in designated areas only
- Avoid shortcuts through traffic areas
- Never walk under the raised load of a forklift
- Stop and look both ways at intersections
- Stay clear when a forklift is backing up or turning
- Watch out so you don't trip on the lowered forks of a stopped forklift
- Pay attention to what's going on around you at all times
- Listen for horns and look for flashing lights
- Let the forklift operator know when and where you're working in an area
- Never hitch a ride on a forklift
- Never engage in horseplay around a forklift

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