

Powered Industrial Trucks Safety

In municipal operations, powered industrial trucks are found in transfer/recycle facilities, public works operations, schools, wastewater and water treatment facilities, civic center/sports complexes and airports. Forklifts cause thousands of serious accidents and injuries every year. Potential hazards include tipping over, falling off docks and ramps, pedestrians struck by trucks, struck by falling loads, collisions, maintenance mishaps including fuel and battery accidents. Standard equipment, such as rear view mirrors, audible back-up/motion alarms, headlights / taillights, horns, and review of the operator's manual coupled with safe operating practices can help reduce these accidents!



Safe Practices

Operating Forklifts

- ◆ **Always** follow the operator's manual recommendations for operating the forklift.
- ◆ **Always** inspect the floor/ground you will be operating the forklift on for stability and appropriate floor load rating.
- ◆ **Always** wear proper PPE such as hard hat, safety glasses, hearing protection and proper footwear.
- ◆ **Always** keep a clear view of where you're going. Travel in reverse if carrying a load that obstructs forward vision.
- ◆ **Always** travel with loads to the up slope side of the forklift for both ascending and descending a slope or incline.
- ◆ **Always** sound horn when approaching doorways, aisles, pedestrian walkways, and blind corners.
- ◆ **Always** obey speed limits, signs and floor markings.
- ◆ **Always** center load on the pallet or carry close to your drive wheels.
- ◆ **Always** cross railroad tracks at a 45° angle.
- ◆ **Always** watch out for overhead pipes and wires.
- ◆ **Always** perform inspection per the manufacturer's requirement prior to use.
- ◆ **Always** keep engine compartment, radiator, and drive train areas free of accumulations of dust, paper, grease etc. (Reduce chance of Fire)
- ◆ **Always** watch for wet, oily or icy surfaces. Whenever possible AVOID rough surfaces, bumps, uneven floors and sharp turns.
- ◆ **Always** travel with the forks 4"-6" from the floor or ground level.
- ◆ **Always** if operating around other forklifts maintain a three-forklift length distance between forklifts and **never** attempt passing.
- ◆ **Always** know your forklift lifting capacity and the weight of the load you are lifting. **Never** exceed the forklift's rated lifting capacity, found on the data plate.
- ◆ **Never** reach or put any part of your body between the mast and forklift.
- ◆ **Never** block aisles, doors, exits, electrical panels, or fire extinguishers.
- ◆ **Never** set equipment in motion until air / hydraulic pressure is built-up.
- ◆ **Never** add field counter weights (people, concrete blocks, etc.)

- ◆ **Never** allow passengers unless a seat provided for them.
- ◆ **Never** allow unlicensed/untrained personnel to operate the forklift.

Parking Safety

- ◆ **Always** park on level ground, place the vehicle in neutral, and set the parking brake. If brake doesn't work, tag the forklift out of service and apply wheel chocks.
- ◆ **Always** lower forks and attachments to ground level when the forklift is parked.
- ◆ **Always** stop the engine and remove key.
- ◆ **Always** face the forklift and maintain 3 points of contact when mounting and dismounting the operator's compartment.

Working around Forklifts

- ◆ **Never** stand or walk under or in front of elevated forklifts. (Pedestrians always have the right-of-way, however they are hard to be seen.)
- ◆ **Be Cautious** about fumes and carbon monoxide. When working indoor or in an enclosed space, make sure the ventilation system is working properly. If feeling weak, sleepy, dizzy, or headache develops, then turn off truck and get fresh air immediately. Have a qualified mechanic inspect the operating condition of the forklift.
- ◆ **Always** wear your seatbelt. Seatbelts are nearly 100% effective at preventing death during a tip-over, the leading cause of serious accidents! They will prevent you from being ejected from the operator's seat.

Work Platforms

In most cases, work platforms that support workers should only be used if other methods are not available, such as ladders, scaffolds, or other elevating work platforms.

When on a raised work platform, workers may be at risk of:

- contact with unguarded moving parts of the forklift
- contact with electrical power lines
- contact with storage racks, scaffolding, roof structures, and overhead obstructions
- harm due to adverse weather conditions (e.g., work done outdoors in high winds)
- falling off of the platform because of
- unplanned movement of the truck
- unguarded platforms
- operating the lift truck on uneven ground
- not attaching the platform securely to the forks of the lift truck
- Injury if the lift truck tips over, ejecting the worker.
- Only attach a commercially manufactured work platform if allowed by the forklift manufacturer.
- Only use a "homemade" work platform if a registered engineer has evaluated the platform and connection points.

What Are the Main Causes of Forklift Accidents?

The main causes of forklift accidents fall into three risk categories: user error, work environment, and mechanical design. Inadequately trained personnel are responsible for a significant portion of forklift accidents. OSHA estimates that as many as 70 percent of forklift accidents could have been avoided through proper training.

Overtuned vehicles are the leading cause of forklift fatalities. There are a number of factors that contribute to forklift tip-overs, including user errors like improper turning, driving with elevated loads, and turning or stopping too quickly as well as environmental factors like unstable surfaces and unclear forklift lanes.

Remember and follow these safe practices to prevent an accident with your forklift!!!