

# Forklift safety: overview



Forklift Safety 1 Forklift Safety Many industries and operations (manufacturing, agricultural and warehousing) use powered industrial trucks (including forklift trucks or lift trucks) routinely in the workplace. Forklift trucks are used to move, raise or lower objects that are stored in containers or on pallets to other areas of the workplace. Their use helps to improve workplace productivity and reduces the need for excessive manual handling of goods and objects by employees.

However, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health there are around 100 fatalities and 20, 000 serious injuries each year. Here, in the USA, as a result of forklift truck incidents. Pre Operational Check Pre operational check is the single most important part of operating a forklift. Without properly doing so, you are asking for a disaster. Possible injuries or death to yourself or others could vary likely happen under the wrong circumstances. The equipment you are operating is subject to failure, and it is just a matter of time until it does.

It is the operators responsible to check for these failures. OSHA requires that all forklifts be examined at least daily before being placed in service. Forklifts used on a round-the-clock basis must be examined after each shift. [29 CFR 1910. 178(q)(7)]. The operator should conduct a pre-start visual check with the key off and then perform an operational check with the engine running. The forklift should not be placed in service if the examinations show that the vehicle may not be safe to operate.

A vehicle in need of repair, defective or in any way unsafe, should not be driven and should be Forklift Safety 2 taken out of service immediately. Any problems should be recorded on the appropriate documents and reported to

a supervisor. Forklift Capacities and Load Handling There are many different types of forklift trucks with different load capacities and they differ for specified maximum weight and forward center of gravity for a load. Worker injuries mainly occur as a result of falls from forklift, forklift overturn, pedestrian collision and crushing incidents. Operator falls can result as the worker ascends or descends into the driver cab or is ejected from the vehicle in the event of a collision or other incident. Forklift trucks may overturn as a result of overload, unequal center of gravity of the load or travel over an uneven surface causing the vehicle to topple over. Forty-two percent of forklift fatalities are caused by the operator trying to jump from a tipping vehicle. Wearing your seat belt is the best safety measure.

Pedestrian co-workers, without adequate preventative measures, are at risk from forklift collision or accidents associated with an unsafe load. Forklift Training Standards There are strict standards in relation to forklift training, operation and maintenance. For example, people under the age of 18 years, in non-agricultural industries, are not permitted to operate a forklift truck. All forklift operators must have undergone practical training before operation of a forklift and are required to undertake refresher courses throughout their operating careers.

Powered industrial trucks must also comply with standards as defined in the Forklift Safety 3 " American National Standard for Powered Industrial Trucks, ANSI B56. 1-1969". The OSHA standards that employers and employees must adhere to are those as stated in the General Industry Standards. " Powered industrial trucks", and standards for Marine Terminals (29 CFR 1917 Subpart

C, " Cargo handling gear and equipment") and Longshoring (29 CFR 1918 Subpart G, " Cargo handling gear and equipment other than ship's gear").

There are other directives and regulations that employers should be aware of. OSHA and NIOSH both comprehensively outline regulations or signpost employers and employees to all the regulations that apply. Conclusion Not just the workers working in the vicinity, but even the forklift operator themselves are vulnerable to accidents which can result in minor or severe injury or even death. Forklift safety rules stress on lawful riding, speed limits, unauthorized operations, proper signals and load carrying capacity.

Most often, accidents occur when these rules are not followed properly. Accidents are unfortunate mishaps which could take place anywhere, same is the case with forklift accidents. Though they can't be totally prevented, it is possible to minimize them by providing proper training to the operators, taking some safety measures and making use of our presence of mind. When you are operating equipment in an unsafe manner, not only are you endangering your life, but also those around you. Always remember, safety comes first.