Forklift Trucks – Maintaining Truck Control – Fact Sheets



HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN CONTROL WHEN HANDLING PALLETS?

Ensure that forks are:

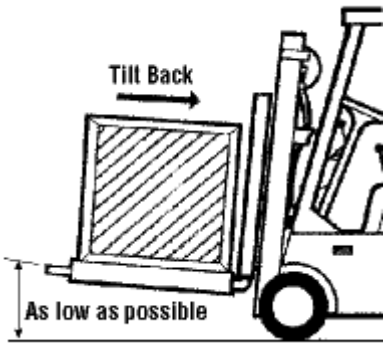
- Level.
- High enough to go into the pallet.
- Proper width to provide even distribution of the weight.
- All the way under the load, reaching up to at least two-thirds of the load length.

How do you maintain control when lifting, tilting, and stacking a load?

- Lift the load straight until it is clear, then tilt back.
- Watch that the load does not catch on adjacent loads or obstructions.
- Do not raise or lower the forks before you stop the lift truck and set the brakes.
- Ensure that the forks are free of the load before backing up.

How do you maintain control when traveling?

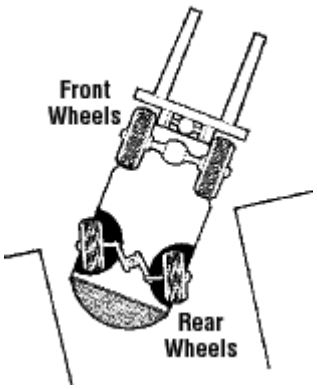
- Tilt loads backwards.
- Travel with forks as low as possible from the floor and tilted back (usually within 10-15 cm (4 to 6 inches) above the floor).
- Match speed to, load, presence of pedestrians, obstructions, and driving and workplace conditions, including slippery surfaces.
- Obey posted traffic signs, and follow all traffic control requirements for that work location (e.g., driving on the right hand side, lane markings, etc.).
- Decrease speed at all corners, sound horn and watch the swing of both the rear of the lift truck and the load.
- Watch for pedestrians. Keep a safe distance from other lifting devices, pedestrians, elevated surfaces, ramp edges, machinery, etc.
- Avoid sudden stops.



- Travel in reverse when a load blocks your vision and always look in the direction of travel.
- Check for adequate overhead clearance when entering an area or when raising the forks.
- Watch out for the following dangers on the floor or roadway: oil spots, wet spots, loose objects, or holes, rough surfaces, people, and other vehicles.
- Approach at an angle when crossing railroad tracks.
- Maintain a safe working limit from all overhead power lines.
- Do not turn on ramps.
- Do not elevate the load when the forklift truck is on an incline.
- Do not allow riders, unless a safe place for the rider has been povided by the truck’s manufacturer.

How should you steer to maintain control?

- Have the load carried by the front wheels.
- Turn with the rear wheels.
- Do not turn a lift truck steering wheel sharply at fast speeds.
- Do not overload a lift truck. It can cause a loss of steering control.
- Do not add extra weight to a counterweight to improve steering.



How do you maintain control when driving in reverse?

- Face the rear.
- Sound horn before moving.
- Go slowly.
- Stop when vision is limited or blocked. Go in reverse, or use a signaller.

How do you maintain control when traveling up or downhill?

Always check with the manufacturer’s operating instructions. In general:

- Loaded trucks, when travelling up and down hill that is greater than a 5% grade, should travel with the load pointed uphill.
- Unloaded truck should travel with the forks (load-engaging means) pointed down hill regardless of the grade.
- Do not turn until on level ground when ever possible.

How should you shutdown the forklift truck?

- Park in an approved location.
- Set the brakes.
- Lower the forks or load to the floor.
- Neutralize the controls.
- Turn off the motor switch or turn off controls and remove the key.
- Shut off the fuel supply (e.g., disconnect battery or go through propane shut-down procedures).
- Block the wheels if the truck is parked on an incline.

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