Forklift Trucks – Professional Operator – Fact Sheets



WHO CAN OPERATE THE FORKLIFT?

Forklift trucks should be operated only by experienced workers who are trained, certified or licensed to perform this task. Some jurisdictions specify that only a “competent” or “authorized” person may operate powered lift trucks and others may specify a minimum operator age (e.g., 18 years or older).

The CSA standard B335-15 “Safety standard for lift trucks” includes the development and implementation of a lift truck safety program, operator training requirements, qualifications of the lift truck trainer (including medical and fitness requirements), maintenance and repair practices, etc.

What should an operator do when operating the forklift truck?

- Know the recommended load limit of the forklift and never exceed it.
- Know how to assess the weight of the load to be lifted.
- Do a visual and operational check of the forklift at the start of the shift.
- Always inspect and wear any seat belt or operator restraint device/system when these devices are available on the forklift truck.
- Know how to properly enter and leave the vehicle.
- Be familiar with the route for travel.
- Look ahead for any obstructions or restrictions that might be in the path you are going to travel (e.g., slippery floors, items in the path, weight restrictions for floors, dock or bridge plates, elevators, etc.).
- Check for adequate overhead clearance before raising the load.
- Operate a forklift smoothly when stopping, starting, lifting and tilting.
- Know the blind spots of the lift truck with and without a load.
- Use corner mirrors, back-up alarms, buzzers and warning lights to help prevent collisions.
- Communicate with workers who are nearby so they understand where you plan to travel.
- Keep pedestrians away from a forklift in operation. Operate with extreme caution when near pedestrians.
- Stop when anyone crosses the route being travelled. Lower the load to the floor, and wait until clear.

- Operate at a safe speed, taking into consideration all conditions.
- If loading another vehicle (e.g., transport truck), verify that the load wheels on the other vehicle are chocked before driving into the space.
- Use proper procedures when travelling on inclines or ramps. See Forklift Trucks – Maintaining Truck Control.
- Ensure that the fire exits, stairways, and fire equipment are not blocked by the truck or the load.
- Wear leather gloves when moving or shifting loads or when checking skids.
- Wear fully laced safety boots to give impact protection when moving loads or skids and to provide ankle support when mounting and dismounting lift truck.
- Remain alert and prepare for the unexpected.
- Note anything that affects the normal operation of the forklift and tell the supervisor immediately.
- Keep hands, arms, head, feet and legs inside the confines of a moving forklift.
- Stay in the truck in case of overturn.
- Report any collisions, damage or near-miss incidents to a supervisor immediately.

What should an operator not do when operating a forklift truck?

The operator should not:

- Operate a lift truck that does not have capacity rating information.
- Travel with the load raised more than ten centimetres (4 inches) from the floor.
- Leave the vehicle unattended while running or loaded.
- Allow unauthorized persons to operate the vehicle.
- Try to move or adjust any part of the load, the forklift or the surroundings when on the forklift.
- Lift a load that extends above the load backrest unless no part of the load can possibly slide back toward the operator.
- Allow anyone but the operator to ride on the forklift, unless the forklift truck has been designed for second person.
- Use pallets elevated by forklifts as an improvised working platform.
- Allow anyone to stand or walk under the elevated part of any forklift, whether loaded or unloaded.,

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