Forklift Trucks – Traffic Management – Fact Sheets



WHY IS IMPORTANT TO MANAGE FORKLIFT TRUCKS AND PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC?

Traffic management one way to minimize the risk of an incident by creating controls to ensure everyone's safety. When planning for traffic management, be sure to consult with the health and safety committee or representative, forklift operators, and workers (pedestrians) who have tasks in the area. After controls are in place, they must be regularly reviewed to ensure their effectiveness.

A forklift truck safety program should consider many factors.

What should be considered when planning for forklift truck traffic management in a workplace?

Create a written traffic management plan. Conduct a hazard assessment to determine what hazards are present and what controls are required. Factors specific to traffic control include:

- The flow of all traffic, including both forklift truck and pedestrian needs
- The tasks/jobs being done, including areas where there is higher potential for collisions
- The braking distance of forklift trucks when carrying a load, the distance loads could fall (including rolling/ splashing), and factors that affect forklift stability
- The equipment or items used or stored in the area
- Visibility for safe operation, such as the way the forklift mast, load, or stacked goods obstruct the operator's view
- Overhead and side clearances (at loading docks, transfer areas, storage areas, aisles, doorways, ramps, in rooms/containers, etc.) to allow the safe operation of the truck
- Storage rack systems that reduce the risk of contact between the beams and the operator
- That all areas (floors, aisles, ramps, grades, docks, passageways, etc.) be kept clear of hazards, and be strong enough to support the weight of the truck and its load

Traffic plans should also consider the need for good ventilation, lighting, and

noise control

What are some controls that can be considered in a traffic management plan?

Controls may include:

- Eliminate the need to move loads, or to move loads in areas where pedestrians are not present
- Substitute a forklift truck with other suitable load moving equipment
- Change the workplace layout to minimize the need for pedestrians to work in close proximity to the truck, or to minimize the cross flow of traffic
- Clearly define areas for the forklift and pedestrians to operate within (e.g., pedestrian exclusion zones, forklift exclusion zones). These zones should be based on work/task patterns, forklift movements, braking distance, stability of the forklift, and the loads being handled.
- Use physical barriers, markings, etc. to define the zones
- Install assistive devices such as convex mirrors at intersections, warning lights to be used when trucks or workers are in the area, and devices on the truck (such as mirrors, proximity sensing devices, cameras, reversing alarms, communication radios, and warning lights). Be sure that these devices do not limit the driver’s view.
- Set speed limits and the boundaries of the exclusion zones to take into account the braking distance of loaded forklift trucks, the distance loads could fall (including rolling/splashing) and the factors affecting forklift stability
- Establish traffic rules for forklift trucks, including speed, stopping at intersections or high risk areas, hand and horn signals, making eye contact with pedestrians, and the use of back up warning devices.
- Establish traffic rules for pedestrians, including walking only in designated areas, who has the right-of-way at intersections, making eye contact with the driver, and education about how a lift truck moves/travels
- Use competent signallers, where necessary
- Establish communication methods, warning signs, or other safeguards
- Have the forklift truck operator inspect (on foot) the area to be travelled before moving the load
- Educate and train for both drivers and pedestrians. Topics may include the workplace’s rules for safe operation of trucks such as for speed limits, stopping at intersections, and hand and horn signals. Another example is to have pedestrians sit in the driver’s seat to better understand the driver’s visibility limitations with and without a load
- Wear personal protective equipment, such as high visibly clothing
- Educate contractors and visitors about your traffic management plan and procedures

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