Forklift Trucks – Work Platforms to Elevate Personnel – Fact Sheet



WHAT IS A FORKLIFT WORK PLATFORM?

A forklift work platform is a unit or cage that is integrated (built in), or designed to be supported on the forks of a lift truck.

Work platforms that are used to elevate (lift or raise) workers must provide appropriate support and safety measures. Generally speaking, these platforms are either commercially manufactured, or designed and certified by a professional engineer for this specific purpose.



What are the hazards of using work platforms to elevate workers?

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

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.

What steps should be taken when a work platform is used to elevate personnel?

Always make sure that:

- all persons involved are appropriately educated and trained for the tasks assigned, and the industrial lift trucks are operated by a competent person.
- platforms used for elevating personnel are built according to the appropriate design requirements. CSA Standard B335-15 Safety standard for lift trucks recommends meeting American National Standards Institute/Industrial Truck Standards Development Foundation ANSI/ITSDF B56.1, Safety Standard for Low Lift and High Lift Trucks, or ANSI/ITSDF B56.6-2011, Safety Standard for Rough Terrain Forklift Trucks, as applicable.
- guardrails or travel restraint systems are in place and properly used to prevent falls. Travel restraint systems for workers must meet applicable legislation and/or CSA standards.
- toe boards are present. Toe board stop small items from falling off the platform.
- a screen or barrier is present to prevent the person on the platform from coming in contact with the lift mechanism itself.
- the fall arrest systems are readily available and are properly used. Fall arrest systems must be designed, installed, and used according applicable legislation and/or CSA standards.
- the platform is attached as outlined in the manufacturer’s instructions, and that the platform is securely attached to the forks.
- the forks are secured using any necessary devices and are set at the correct width apart.
- the lifting mechanism operates smoothly throughout its entire lift height, both empty and loaded.
- all lift limiting devices and latches are functional, where provided.
- personnel are protected from any moving parts.
- overhead protection is provided where needed.
- constant voice and other hand or signal communication is maintained with the lift operator.
- appropriate personal protective equipment is worn, such as hard hat, hand protection, footwear with ankle and toe protection, clothing suitable for weather conditions, high visibility apparel, full body harness, and/or lanyard.
- when using full-body harness, to secure the harness to designated anchor

points recommended by the manufacturer or an engineer on the work platform.

What steps should operators of the forklift platforms take?

- Make sure you have the appropriate education and training to do the job safely.
- Before elevating personnel, mark or cordon off the area with safety cones or other devices to warn others of the work being done.
- Make sure the lift truck is on a flat, level surface, and has firm, level footing.
- Make sure the platform is attached securing to the forks or mast as directed by the manufacturer.
- Make sure that the platform is horizontal, and centered. The platform should not be tilted forward or rearward when elevated.
- Make sure that the combined weight of the platform, load, and personnel equals one-half of the capacity as indicated on the nameplate of the lift truck, or one-third of the capacity as indicated on the nameplate of the rough terrain lift truck.
- Perform a test or trial lift before raising personnel in the work platform to make sure

- the work platform will reach the area where the task is to be done,
- the mast is vertical or the boom travels vertically,
- there is adequate clearance between work platform and truck, and any surrounding items such as a the building, any overhead obstructions, storage rack, scaffold, or energized electrical wires and equipment.

- Place all travel controls in neutral and set the parking brake.
- Make sure the personnel working on the platform follow all requirements for fall protection.
- Lower the platform to floor level for entry and exit of personnel.
- Make sure that personnel is lifted and lowered smoothly, with caution, and only at their request.
- Keep hands and feet clear of controls other than those in use.
- Always lower the platform before moving the lift truck when you need to adjust or reposition.
- At all times, stay at the controls of the truck when in use.

What should not be done when using the forklift work platform?

Operators:

- Do not operate without appropriate training or unless under the direct supervisor of an instructor.
- Do not operate if guards are missing or not working properly.
- Do not move the truck if the platform is elevated or if there is a person on the platform.
- Do not let anything interfere with the fall-arresting system used by the personnel.
- Do not let anyone climb on any part of the truck while entering or exiting the platform.

Workers in the work platform:

- Do not work on a work platform unless the lift truck is on a firm flat

surface, and the platform is equipped with guardrails, travel restraint system, or fall-arresting system.
- Do not use stand or climb on guardrails, other railings, planks and ladders, on the platform to try to reach higher.
- Do not fill all of the available space on the platform as overcrowding will reduce the space needed to do the work.
- Do not climb on any part of the truck while entering or exiting. Enter from floor level.

Source: © Copyright 1997-2021 CCOHS