Powered Industrial Trucks (Forklifts) Meeting Kit



Powered industrial trucks, commonly called forklifts or lift trucks, are used in many industries, primarily to move materials. They can also be used to raise, lower, or remove large objects or a number of smaller objects on pallets or in boxes, crates, or other containers. Powered industrial trucks can either be ridden by the operator or controlled by a walking operator.

HAZARDS WITH OPERATING POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS

The hazards commonly associated with powered industrial trucks vary depending on the vehicle type and the workplace where the truck is used. Each type of truck presents different operating hazards.

- Forklift trucks sometimes overturn due to overload, incorrect load positioning, driving and operating errors.
- Operators of forklift trucks may suffer serious traumas when the load falls from the truck, or stacked load collapses, etc.
- Forklift Truck Operators may, in the course of time, suffer from back, neck and hands and arm pains, cause by uncomfortable seating, vibrations and excessive physical efforts.

OTHER RISK FACTORS

- Lift trucks are inadvertently driven off loading docks
- Lifts fall between docks and an unsecured trailed
- Workers are struck by a lift truck
- Workers fall while on elevated pallets and tines

COMMON FORKLIFT HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS

1. Improper Operation and Use ? speeding, racing or sharp cornering.
2. Load Hazards ? maximum load limit exceeded.
3. Insufficient or Incorrect Maintenance ? increases risk of accidents.
4. Pedestrians ? non essential pedestrians in same area as forklifts.
5. Floor Conditions ? debris, puddles, unstable ground and floor obstructions.
6. Overhead Obstructions ? mezzanines levels and low hanging doorways.

7. Unit Refueling ? refueling and rechanging combustibility risks.
8. Attachments ? forklift attachments affect lift capacity and clearance.
9. Blind Spots ? cause unexpected impacts.

FORKLIFT PROTECTION

Train The Operator. All personnel who operate PITs must be trained and certified in their safe operation every three years. The training includes both classroom and vehicle operation. The training covers:

- Features of the specific PIT to be operated.
- Operating procedures of the specific PIT to be operated.
- Safety concerns of specific PIT to be operated.
- Workplace conditions and safety concerns of areas where PITs will be operated.
- Learn and practice actual operation of specific PITs to be operated.
- Demonstrate proficiency performing the PIT operator duties specific to the workplace.

ELIMINATE AND MITIGATE HAZARDS OF POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS OPERATION

- Regulatory training, evaluations, refresher training and remedial training
- To help avoid pedestrian and other collisions, consider adding proximity detection in new PITs.
- If the operator is 25 feet or more from the forklift or cannot see it, the equipment is considered unattended and must be shut down.
- If the operator?s view is obstructed, they should travel in reverse or ask a spotter to assist them.
- An operator must be aware of the equipment?s blind spots.
- Before lifting the load, place the forklift in neutral and set the parking brake.
- Prior to operation, analyze and control the hazards of the operating location.
- Prior to operation, be aware of any high-voltage electric clearances. Take an outage if necessary.
- Always wear a seat belt on the PIT when provided.
- Always inspect the PIT before use.
- Stay a safe distance from platform and ramp edges.
- Be aware of and watch for other forklifts and pedestrians in the work area.
- Ensure clear visibility of the work area when loading, unloading and operating a forklift.
- Use three points of contact to safely enter and exit the PIT.
- Know the clearances above, behind, in front of and on both sides of the PIT.
- Be extremely mindful of operational speed and follow posted speed limits.
- Use the PIT?s warning and visibility lights, mirrors and horns to warn others as necessary.
- Never exceed the load rating, and make sure the load is balanced before moving.
- Never use the forks to lift people.
- Never allow anyone under a suspended load.

FINAL WORD

Operator error is a leading root cause for PIT incidents, largely due to insufficient hazard assessments and human performance errors. Contributing factors are employers that fail to properly train operators.