

Don't Treat Forklifts Lightly

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Many forklift injuries are received by people working or walking around forklifts in operation. Incident rates go down and productivity goes up when forklift operators are correctly trained. Learn safe driving practices, loading procedures and proper maintenance to prevent injuries and incidents.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Operating a forklift incorrectly can be hazardous. Speeding, restricted vision and failure to yield can lead to injuries. Sudden braking can tip the forklift or drop the materials you are transporting. Unmanageable or unstable loads can cause a forklift to overturn.

EXAMPLE

A forklift operator is driving with his forks up and fails to sound his horn when he turns a corner. He hits a fellow worker, knocking him unconscious.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Driving a forklift requires special skills and practice. Use common sense and be aware of special considerations. These tips will help lighten your hazard load:

- Inspect your forklift before each shift. Check tires for damage and correct air pressure. Test your brakes, warning signals and lights. Ensure the steering turns in both directions to a full lock. Check the lifting system to make sure it's working correctly. Make sure the mast is not broken or cracked. Check for adequate fuel, water, oil and a fully charged battery.
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE), including hardhat and safety footwear.

Additional PPE will be required depending on the work environment and the cargo being handled.

- Use the right forklift for the job. Consider the location, capacity limits, potential hazards and the load requirement. Never lift loads overhead unless the forklift is fitted with an overhead guard.
- Always drive carefully. Don't speed, and make sure to sound your horn at corners and danger spots. Stop before all doorways. Follow the common traffic pattern by keeping to the right of an aisle. Never carry passengers. Use caution when driving and loading around pedestrians? they always have the right of way!
- To avoid the danger of overturning when carrying a load, keep the forks close to the ground and the mast tilted back.
- Drive cautiously on hills and inclines, and make sure to always look in the direction of travel. Drive an unloaded forklift down slopes with forks facing downhill. If carrying a load, drive backwards with forks facing uphill.? Avoid parking on a slope. If necessary, ensure the wheels are blocked.
- Never leave a forklift unattended, without first putting it in neutral, with the parking brake on and the forks lowered.

CONCLUSION

Forklifts make tasks easier in the workplace. As with any machinery, take the time to ensure that you have proper training and always use caution.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Sudden stops can tip a forklift or drop the materials you are carrying.
 - True
 - False
2. A forklift must be fitted with an overhead guard to lift loads overhead.
 - True
 - False
3. It isn't important to sound your horn at corners and danger spots.
 - True
 - False
4. Pedestrians must yield to forklift vehicles.
 - True
 - False
5. If you have to leave your forklift, even for a moment, you must always put it in neutral, engage the parking brake and lower the forks.
 - True
 - False

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Alex is asked by a co-worker to help him prepare a load that has to be transported across the terminal by forklift. When he arrives to help, he notices that the load is too large for the vehicle and not properly strapped together. He points this out to the driver, who says, "I have to get this delivered fast, and I'm only going a short distance. It'll be fine, trust me." What should Alex do?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

ANSWERS:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. True | 4. False |
| 2. True | 5. true |
| 3. False | |