



FORKLIFT SAFETY TIPS: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

Driving forklifts requires skill and agility. Although they are powerful machines commonly used on many worksites, there is an element of risk involved. According to OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration), forklifts account for nearly 100,000 injuries per year. There are about 900,000 forklifts operating, so that's almost a 1 in 10 chance that each will be involved in some type of accident every year. That's frightening. Eliminating dangers is critical.

Here some **FORKLIFT SAFETY TIPS** and suggestions for safety training and guidelines that will hopefully prevent accidents.



LEARN HOW TO OPERATE A FORKLIFT PROPERLY.

Many accidents occur because the operator hasn't been properly trained. They should certify and license in accordance with OSHA regulations before they take an operator seat.

IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL TRAINING IN THE WORKPLACE.

Additionally, employers should evaluate operators' performance at least once every three years and supplement driving training with workplace training, demonstrations and lectures on safety rules.

DRESS PROPERLY.

Drivers should wear protective clothing, including hard hats, safety boots and reflective high-visibility jackets. Keep loose clothing away from anywhere that it could catch in the machine—and wear a seat belt.

INSPECT THE FORKLIFT DAILY.

Eliminating dangers should be a priority. Test operating controls, such as the horn, brakes, light and steering wheel and the forks for cracks, damage or distortion.



KEEP LOADS STABLE AND SECURE.

You want to make sure your loads are balanced and tilted backward when the machine moves. It's also important to know the lifting capacity to prevent damage to the driver, equipment and load.

DON'T CARRY PASSENGERS.

A forklift is a piece of working equipment that is not meant to carry additional people. They carry loads. If you need to lift a person, use a secure work platform and cage.



MAINTAIN THE APPROPRIATE OPERATING SPEED.

Operate the forklift within the designated speed limit and avoid fast moves, such as stopping, turning and switching directions that could make the vehicle tip over.

KEEP A SAFE OPERATING DISTANCE FROM OTHER WORKSITE EQUIPMENT.

Unless it's absolutely necessary, don't operate a forklift within close proximity of other machines and equipment on your worksite. That gives you enough room to stop safely if you must.

WATCH OUT FOR PEDESTRIANS AND OBJECTS THAT MAY BE IN YOUR WAY.

It's important to file operation rules defined by OSHA, including maintaining 360o visibility so that you make eye contact with people around you and can see other obstacles.

AVOID HAZARDOUS AREAS WITHIN RANGE OF THE EQUIPMENT.

Loads can fall off forklifts, making it dangerous for anyone standing beside or underneath it. Always keep your hands or other body parts away from the mast of the forklift when it is moving.

Knowing how to operate a forklift safely and paying attention as you drive are key to reducing or avoiding accidents and injury.

If you want to learn how to become a forklift driver, enroll in heavy equipment training programs at Heavy Equipment Colleges of America (HEC). Learn the foundations of construction, as well as the skills—and safety precautions—to operate heavy equipment.

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