

Safety forklifts

Forklift Operators Need The Right Training

Just because you can drive a car or a truck doesn't mean you can handle a forklift. Forklifts, like any tool in the workplace, must only be used with the proper training as set out by your company.

Keep these good habits in mind when operating a forklift:

Good Driving

- Don't carry passengers.
- Be particularly careful when driving around pedestrians. It is the operator's job to avoid the pedestrians.
- The general rule of the road is "Keep to the Right." However, when driving between rows of machines or racks it is sometimes safer to keep to the center of the gangway or aisle.
- Sound your horn at every potential danger spot, but remember, sounding your horn does not give you automatic right of way.
- Stop before all doorways — sound your horn and go through slowly.
- Never run over unprotected cables or flexible pipes.
- Avoid sudden braking when loaded as this may cause the load to fall off or the truck to tip.

Slopes

- When your forklift is loaded, always travel slowly down slopes with the forks facing uphill, and up slopes with the load in front, taking extra care if vision is obstructed.

Leaving The Forklift

- A forklift should not be left unattended on a slope. If it has to be parked on a hill in an emergency, block the wheels.

- On completion of work, the forklift should be parked in its allotted parking area, forks fully lowered and tilted forward, the engine switched off, the parking brake applied and keys returned to a secure place.

Attention to Forks and Load

- Where possible, drive with the forks lowered and the mast tilted slightly back. Because of the danger of overturning, the forklift should not be driven with the load elevated for longer than is absolutely necessary.
- When a high load restricts forward vision, drive in reverse except when going up an incline.
- Do not pick up a load if someone is standing close to it.
- Stop people from walking underneath the load.
- If the load appears unsuitable or the pallet unsound, it should be left alone and its condition reported to your supervisor.
- If the forklift is not fitted with an overhead guard, do not lift loads above the operator's head.

Forklift Maintenance

- Inflate tires to the proper pressure. Incorrectly inflated tires can affect the stability of the load. Tires should also be checked for damage, such as nails and other imbedded material, or cuts and bubbles.



- Hand brake and foot brakes should be checked to ensure they are working efficiently.
- Check the horn.
- Check fuel, water and oil levels in internal combustion engine forklifts and batteries of battery operated trucks to ensure they are adequately charged. Make sure the charger is switched off and the charge lead is disconnected and properly stored.
- Make sure systems for lifting, tilting and manipulation are working properly and hydraulic systems are free from obvious leaks.
- Double check steering. Make sure it is free and turns in both directions to full lock. Check for excessive play.

Although driving a forklift is not like driving your car, there are certain rules of the road you must follow when operating one. Get the training you need to be a safe forklift operator.

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