

Forklift Safety

Goals

This safety session should teach employees to:

- Understand a forklift's potential hazards.
- Know the basics of forklift safety for operators and pedestrians.

Applicable Regulations:

Cal OSHA GISO 3650. Industrial Trucks. General

1 Incorrect or careless forklift operations can cause dangerous accidents.

Forklifts, unlike cars and trucks, often steer with rear wheels and can tip easily. Operators or nearby workers can be injured or even killed if a forklift:

- Tips over
- Falls off a loading dock
- Collides with or drops a load on equipment, a vehicle, or another person
- Other forklift hazards include:
 - Operator injuries caused by jumping on or off the forklift or placing arms or legs outside it
 - Fires or explosions caused by improper refueling or recharging, or using an improper forklift in an area with hazardous substances

2 The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires forklift operators to be specially trained and authorized.

They must know:

- Forklift types, uses, designs, limitations, parts, and inspection procedures
- Safe forklift loading, unloading, operating, parking, and refueling procedures

3 OSHA requires forklift inspection before use each day or shift.

Operators should never use a forklift that's damaged or not operating properly.

4 Forklift operators should always use required protections.

- Put on seat belts, if installed.
- Wear a hard hat— it is recommended, but not required.
- Wear sturdy shoes with nonskid soles.
- Use safety glasses, hearing protection, gloves, or other personal protective equipment (PPE) required for a job.

5 Operators must follow general safety rules.

- Never indulge in stunt driving or horseplay.
- Keep arms, hands, and legs inside the truck.
- Keep an eye out for surface holes, uneven patches, and overhead clearances.
- Don't drive up to a person standing in front of a bench or any fixed object.

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6 Operators must follow traffic rules.

- Obey speed limits.
- Drive in the assigned lane or on the right.
- Yield the right of way to pedestrians and emergency vehicles.
- Sound the horn at intersections.
- Stay at least three truck lengths behind the vehicle in front of you.
- Stay a safe distance from ramp or platform edges.
- Slow down for turns.
- Stop before going into reverse.
- Don't pass at intersections or blind spots.

Forklifts aren't casual transport.

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- No one is permitted to ride directly on the truck's forks.
- No one can stand or walk under elevated forklift parts, even when empty.
- Unauthorized persons must not ride on forklift trucks.
- If a rider is authorized, there must be a safe place provided on the forklift, such as a forklift designed to carry a rider.

OSHA sets rules for safe forklift refueling.

Forklift refueling and battery charging or replacement requires:

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- Trained employees wearing proper protective equipment
- Special well-ventilated, no-smoking areas that have working fire extinguishers and no flames or sparks.
- Specific step-by-step procedures to protect workers and prevent fires



Discussion Points:

Ask participants for examples of key safety practices for forklift operators and those who work around forklifts.



Conclusion:

- Forklift safety rules protect operators and pedestrians.
- Forklifts effectively lift, load, stack, and move materials. But they can cause serious accidents if they don't have skilled, safe operators and attentive, careful pedestrians.



Test Your Knowledge:

Have your employees take the Forklift Safety quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can judge their ability to understand forklift hazards and precautions and whether they need to review this important topic again soon.

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