



Forklift Safety Tips

Forklifts are extremely useful workplace vehicles, as long as they are used safely by properly trained and competent operators.

Forklifts can be dangerous – they account for 25% of injuries at work. Many workplace accidents involve people being hit or run over by forklift trucks (typically when the forklift is reversing) because the driver did not see them.

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The following basic safety tips will help keep workers safe on and around forklifts.

Safe Operation

- Only operate forklifts if trained, licensed and authorized to do so.
- Wear a safety belt.
- Make sure work paths are free of obstructions.
- Look around before moving.
- Keep hands and feet inside the cab.
- Watch for pedestrians.
- Sound the horn several times when approaching blind corners, exits and entrances.
- Avoid making jerky starts, quick turns or sudden stops.
- Apply the parking brake before leaving the forklift.

Carrying Loads

- Make sure pallets are in good condition, well-stacked and secure.
- Make sure the load doesn't obstruct the view.
- Make sure the load does not exceed capacity of forklift.
- Make extra trips instead of overloading.
- Make sure the vehicle being unloaded has been secured – chocks ahead of wheels and/or trailer restraint systems. Trailer movement is a leading cause of loading accidents.

Operating on Slopes

- Travel slowly when going down slopes.
- Ensure forks face uphill when traveling up or down a slope with a load.
- Ensure forks face downhill when traveling up or down a slope without a load.
- Adjust the tilt (when fitted) to suit the gradient, and raise the forks to clear the ground.

After Operation

- Park the forklift in a safe place on level ground; never on a slope.
- Leave the forklift with mast tilted forward and forks fully lowered with the tips on the floor.
- Apply the parking brake, select neutral, switch off the engine and remove the key.
- Return keys or other activating devices to their place of safe-keeping.
- Report any malfunctions or defects to the supervisor immediately.

Proper Truck Use

- Know the truck's capabilities.
- Be sure the truck meets ANSI safety requirements.
- Keep the load no more than 6 to 10 inches off the floor.
- Use extreme caution when turning.
- Keep the truck in good working order.

