



Safety Program

Forklift Operator Handbook

Prepared by:

in association with:
U.S. Compliance Systems, Inc.

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To the best of our knowledge, the information contained herein is accurate.
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OVERVIEW

Because of their power; weight; size; restricted visibility; and, often, high center of gravity, operation of industrial trucks takes skill and attention to detail. One moment of inattention can lead to a major mishap in an instant.

In the unlikely event that unsafe forklift operations are observed, retraining will be given with emphasis on correcting the improper behavior. Because of the possibility of severe injury to the operator or a bystander, forklifts will be operated in a professional manner and anything less will not be tolerated.

Management is committed to safety and providing a work environment that is free of recognized hazards. That same commitment is expected of all our employees.

Personnel are encouraged to consult with the Program Administrator should they have a question concerning forklift operations especially if it relates to safety.

All truck operators will have ready access to our training program, appropriate OSHA standards, and truck owner/operator manuals.

FORKLIFTS

Forklifts are designed to move items quickly, safely, and cleanly. Forklifts are in a class of vehicles called powered industrial trucks which also includes: tractors; platform lift trucks; motorized hand trucks; and other specialized industrial trucks powered by electric motors or internal combustion engines.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

All truck operators must be thoroughly familiar with the truck, itself. This includes knowing:

- a. instinctively what each and every control does.
- b. how to perform a truck safety check.
- c. the truck's limitations such as maximum load, height and width, visibility, stability, surface requirements.
- d. the trucks stopping and turning ability and its effect on loads.

The below safety rules and guidelines to which one must adhere while operating a forklift have been established. These rules are designed to protect the operator and/or persons adjacent to forklift truck operations.

Specifically:

1. No person shall operate one of our trucks unless authorized in writing.
 - a. Authorization to operate one type of truck does not automatically authorize a person to operate all trucks. Different power sources, visibility restriction, controls, and capacities may dictate, in the judgment of the Program Administrator, that a separate certification process may be required for a different type of truck.
2. No riders are allowed on our forklift unless:
 - a. the truck is specifically designed for such use.
 - b. the rider is authorized by the Program Administrator.
3. The Program Administrator will revoke the authority to operate a truck if unsafe acts are observed or it is apparent that the operator has not retained the knowledge and job skills necessary to safely perform truck operations.
 - a. An operator who has lost his authorization to operate a truck will be retrained, reevaluated, and, if appropriate, re-certified.
4. At the beginning of each shift, the operator will inspect the truck using our Forklift Daily Checklist.
 - a. If deficiencies relating to safety are found, the deficiencies will be noted on the Checklist. The vehicle will not be used until safety defects are repaired.
 - b. If cosmetic damage is discovered during the daily check, it will be noted on the Checklist, however, the truck will be used. Cosmetic faults will not delay our operations.

HAZARDS

The major personal safety hazards involved in truck operation include:

- a. physically hitting a person/object with the truck or load.
- b. having a load fall and hit the operator or other person.
- c. having the truck tip and crush the operator or other person.
- d. fire or explosion during refueling/recharging.

Below are rules and guidelines to control the hazards identified and reduce the likelihood of accident/injury. While some of the procedures may seem too obvious to mention or just plain common sense, remember this — serious, even fatal, accidents have occurred because for one split second an operator forgot or ignored a basic safety rule.

HITTING A PERSON/OBJECT

- a. Never drive up to a person standing in front of a fixed object.
- b. When possible, stay within delineated travel lanes or aisles.
- c. Be seen and/or heard.
- d. Ensure that adequate lighting is available.
- e. Maintain a clear view of travel. If the load blocks or restricts the view, the operator will drive with the load trailing (backwards).
- f. Slow down, sound horn, and do not pass where vision is restricted.
- g. Operate the truck at speeds that will allow it and the load to be stopped in a safe, smooth, manner.
- h. Be aware of ground or floor conditions. Remove loose objects that have found their way to the truck travel lanes. Operate the truck at slower speeds on wet or slippery surfaces.
- i. Of course, stunt or reckless driving is prohibited.
- j. Be aware of the height of the truck and, if equipped, its mast and load. Carelessness can damage overhead objects such as lights, pipes, etc.
- k. Never allow anyone to stand or pass under an elevated portion of any truck at any time.

FALLING LOADS

- a. Know your load -- do not “overstack”. Because practically all loads lifted or hauled by a forklift are not secured to the truck, ensure the load is properly stacked. Generally, loads should be interlaced or banded.
- b. If lifting a load or pallet, get the forks (or other engaging means) as far under the load as possible.
- c. Travel with the load in the lowest position for stability as well as prevention of hitting objects overhead. If using forks, tilt the load backward for stabilization.
- d. Do not exceed the truck’s rated capacity or stack loads too high.
- e. Do not make “jerky” movements such as slamming the brakes or high speed turns.
- f. A load backrest extension will reduce the possibility of part of the load falling rearward.
- g. When using a fork lift, the forks may be tilted forward only for picking up or setting down a load.

TIPPING

Forklifts are, by design, narrow allowing them greater access within the work setting. Unfortunately, a narrow track offers less stability. Tipping or falling off an edge is a preventable accident by following the guidelines below. If your truck tips, keep your body and limbs within the safety of the cage. Wear a seat belt if the truck is so equipped.

- a. Stay within travel lanes.
- b. If entering a trailer, ensure:
 1. the trailer brakes are engaged.
 2. the trailer is secured from movement by means of chocks and/or a locking mechanism.
 3. the tractor is either shut off or removed from the trailer.
 4. the trailer is squared up with the dock opening and dock plates are secure.

5. the traveling surface is capable of supporting the forklift and its load.
6. lighting within the work area is adequate.

NOTE: Falling off a dock edge because a trailer has moved is invariably a serious accident. Do not count on the tractor-trailer driver to lock his brakes or even trust that his brakes work. Physically check and ensure the trailer into which you are taking your powered industrial truck is securely against the dock. If possible, the trailer should be actually attached to the dock, but in all cases, it should be chocked.

- c. Travel with the load in the lowest possible position and avoid sharp turns at higher speeds as well as abrupt truck movements.
- d. Be aware of the surface on which you are traveling -- its traction, ability to hold weight, slope, and surface.
- e. Be especially aware on construction sites. The surface on which you are operating must be firm, level, and capable of supporting the forklift and its load.

FIRE/EXPLOSION DURING REFUELING/RECHARGING

Refueling accidents are not common experiences, however should they occur, they would be sudden and possibly catastrophic. Follow the manufacturer's owner's manual and local fire laws.

- a. There is absolutely NO SMOKING or open flame during any portion of the refueling/recharging process.
- b. An appropriate (B:C) fire extinguisher must be readily available.

OTHER CONCERNS

The program deals primarily with the personal safety of our forklift operators. However, when discussing truck operations, we would be remiss if it were not pointed out that improper truck operations could also result in physical damage to material, trucks, and/or facilities. Proper truck operation will reduce personal injury accidents, and, as an added benefit, prevent general damage.

OPERATOR PROTECTION

A hazard assessment of forklift operations will be conducted by the Program Administrator. Particular attention will be given to hand, head, eye, and foot protection as well as environmental conditions such as atmospheres, heat or cold. If the truck is equipped with a seat belt, it must be worn when the truck is moving.

Keep your limbs within the running lines of the truck and keep your hands and fingers away from moving parts -- particularly the mast on a fork lift truck.

The Program Administrator will perform a hazard assessment of our truck operations and determine what, if any, personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements are appropriate. If PPE (examples: steel toed boots, leather gloves, hard hat, eye protection, etc.) is required, it must be worn.

FORKLIFT OPERATIONS

The following are general operating procedures:

- a. Fire aisles, access to stairways, and fire equipment must be kept clear.
- b. Operators leaving their trucks must ensure the load is fully lowered, controls neutralized, and brakes set. On an incline, the wheels must be blocked. If the operator is 25 feet or more from the forklift or does not have a clear view of the forklift, the power to the forklift must be shut off.
- c. A safe distance shall be maintained from the edge of ramps or platforms while on any elevated surface.
- d. Trucks will be used only for the purpose for which they were designed.
- e. If necessary, use fixed jacks to support semi-trailers.

- f. The overhead guard (used as protection against falling objects) is not necessarily designed to withstand the impact of a falling capacity load.
- g. In the event persons are lifted by a truck, a lifting platform must be securely attached to the lifting mechanism and the persons on the safety platform must have means of shutting off power to the truck.
- h. If more than one truck is operated, they must be separated by a safe distance (at least three truck lengths) and they may not pass each other in intersections, blind spots, or other dangerous locations. The right of way shall be yielded to other trucks in emergency situations.
- i. Trucks traveling in the same direction shall not be passed at all.
- j. Driving on grades:
 - 1. Grades shall be ascended or descended slowly.
 - 2. When ascending or descending grades in excess of 10 percent, loaded trucks shall be driven with the load up grade.
- k. Motorized hand trucks must enter confined areas with the load end forward.

MAINTENANCE

Mechanical maintenance must be performed by an authorized person.

- a. If at any time a forklift is found to be in need of repair, defective, overheating, or in any way unsafe, the truck shall be taken out of service until it has been restored to safe operating condition.
- b. Forklifts should be kept reasonably clean and free of excess oil and grease.

USE OF FORKLIFTS TO SUPPORT SCAFFOLD PLATFORMS

Per 29 CFR 1926.451(c)(2)(v), if deemed appropriate, forklifts may be used to support scaffold platforms with the following conditions:

- a. The forklift will be designed for such use as indicated either:
 1. in the owner's manual, or
 2. by a letter from the manufacturer allowing such use, or
 3. certification by a registered engineer that the forklift is so designed.
- b. The entire scaffold platform is securely attached to the forks.
- c. The fork lift is not moved horizontally while the platform is occupied.
- d. The platform (and machine) meet the requirements of 1926.451 for capacity, construction, access, use, and fall protection.
 1. If the platform is not designed by the manufacturer of the forklift, it must be designed by a qualified person.
 2. The forklift must be capable of supporting, without failure, its own weight and at least four times the maximum intended load.
- e. The platform for elevating personnel must not extend more than 10 inches beyond the wheelbase of the machine in use.
- f. The employees on the platform must be able to have travel and power controls at the platform level.
 1. This requirement is fulfilled by having the forklift operator remain with the forklift while personnel are on the platform.
- g. The use of a forklift to support a scaffold platform will be used only after a determination that the use of other equipment such as scaffolds, scissor lifts, aerial lifts and ladders is not practical.

OPERATOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Read, sign and return this operator acknowledgment to the safety program administrator.

I have read and understand the contents of this Forklift Operator Handbook.

I have been authorized to operate a forklift or other powered industrial truck by virtue of training, experience, and demonstration of operator skills.

I understand that failure to follow established safe work practices may result in revocation of my authority to operate a powered industrial truck. Retraining may be required to re-establish my operating privileges.

I understand that if I have any safety related questions, I should contact the safety program administrator prior to performing work.

Safety Program Administrator:

Phone Number:

(Truck Operator Name)

(Signature)

(Date)