SAFETY
UNLIMITED, Inc.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Safety with Forklifts

Forklifts are excellent labor-saving devices. They save time and reduce the likelihood of injury associated with manual material handling activities. However, forklifts can become very dangerous if operated by a reckless or untrained operator. All operators should receive safety training prior to being allowed to operate a forklift.

Forklift accidents tend to be very serious, involving both personal injury and damage to property. These accidents can be avoided if operators use some common sense and follow safe operating procedures. Do not operate a forklift until you have been properly trained and authorized to do so.

About 100 workers are killed each year as a result of forklift accidents. About 1/4 of these fatalities are caused by overturning. Other common causes are workers being struck by materials, workers being struck by the forklift, and workers falling from the forklift.

Forklift operation is not as simple as it looks. But with a little experience, it's not an impossible skill to master. Unfortunately, those who operate forklifts day in and day out have a tendency to take short cuts and to ignore basic safety rules. They develop the old "It can't happen to me" attitude.

Identifying Forklift Hazards:

You can avoid becoming a statistic if you'll just take the time to review forklift hazards and how to avoid them. Try to keep them in mind each and every time you prepare to use a forklift.

Tipping over and losing part of a load are the most common causes of forklift-related injuries. Some factors you need to consider include:

The capacity of the forklift - can it handle the size and weight of your load?

- Any odd characteristics of the load - is it top heavy, cylindrical, or awkward?
- The condition of the forklift - are the forks damaged or is there some other problem that could cause an accident?
- Where you are and where you are going with the load - are there any obstacles, bumps, ramps, people, cross aisles, or narrow passageways to consider?

Basic Forklift Safety Practices:

Here are a few common safety rules to follow during forklift operation:

1. Use the seat belt. It will keep you secured in the seat in the unplanned event of a tip over.
2. A parked forklift should have the forks flat on the floor with the controls set to neutral and with the parking brake set.
3. A forklift is considered to be "unattended" if the operator is more than 25 feet away or if the forklift is out of the direct vision of the operator. Unattended forklifts should be parked with the power turned off.
4. When operating the forklift on inclines, the load should always be on the uphill side of the incline. Drive forward going up the incline. Drive backward going down the incline.
5. When traveling without a load on the forks, keep the forks approximately four to six inches off the floor.
6. Never allow anyone to walk underneath a raised load.
7. Stop at all blind corners to check for other traffic in the area. This includes other forklifts and pedestrians. Honk your horn and look before you proceed.
8. If carrying a tall load that blocks your forward vision, drive in reverse and turn your head so you can see where you are going.
9. If operating around other forklifts, maintain a three-forklift length distance between forklifts and never attempt passing.
10. Never drive a forklift up to the backs of people who are unaware that the forklift is behind them.

Remember:

Studies show that many of these accidents could have been prevented by better training. No one starts out with the innate knowledge, skills, and abilities to safely operate a forklift. As OSHA requires, drivers must be properly trained to do so.

The lesson to be learned is, operating a forklift without training is dangerous and can even be fatal to you or other employees working in the area.

CARRY IT LOW…DRIVE IT SLOW!!

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests