

MAFES Dawg

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Safety Tips: Forklift Safety



About 100 workers are killed each year as a result of forklift accidents. About 25 of these are the result of rollovers, or turnovers. Other causes are workers being struck by materials being transported, by the forklift itself, or workers falling from the machine.

Operating a forklift looks simple and, with a little experience and staying focused, can be handled in good order. I know from firsthand experience that there is a certain amount of danger involved in any situation where they are being used. I made my share of mistakes before I felt comfortable with using them.

Operators who use them every day tend to be like workers in other vocations; they tend to think that the operation becomes rote. Therein lies the problem! When we think that the operation becomes automatic is when the opportunity for an accident or incident can creep in.

IDENTIFYING THE HAZARDS:

- Capacity of the forklift – Can the machine handle the size and weight of the load?
- Characteristics or traits of the load – Does the load have an inordinate shape in length, width or height?
- Condition of the forks – Damaged forks may harm the load or the forks may not be long enough without extensions to handle the load safely.
- Self identification – Is the route of destination open and sufficient to pass? Are there obstacles that could harm to load or cause you a problem while transporting the load?

- Can other employees see you and can you see the other employees?

FORKLIFT SAFETY RULES:

- Operate the lift only if you have been trained.
- Maintain a safe following distance from other forklifts (if you are in a situation where there is more than one).
- Maintain a controlled rate of speed.
- Drive with the load low to the ground or road, 6-8 inches, depending on the terrain and road level.
- Take extra care when crossing buckboards and bridge plates making sure the load is not too heavy for their capacities or too wide to pass safely.
- Raise and lower the load when you are stopped.
- If you are in areas where other vehicles are in transit, honk your horn for warnings to avoid an accident, in case the other party isn't as focused as you.
- Avoid sharp turns.
- Keep arms and legs inside the boundaries of the vehicle.
- Be sure to wear a hard hat and other protective equipment when necessary.
- Double check to make sure that the load is secure and stable.
- When you leave the forklift, be sure that you lower the forks, neutralize the controls, shut off the engine and set the brakes.

Remember to act responsibly when operating a lift. It not only puts you at risk, but your fellow workers as well.

Ted Gordon – Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.
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Excerpts: www.ncsu.edu/ehs

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Be Alert - - Accidents Hurt~

**PUT SAFETY FIRST-
PREVENT THE WORSE!!**