



The Alpha Group Inc.'s Forklift Safety Tips For Operators & Pedestrians

Introduction

Pedestrians and lift truck operators have a team responsibility for each others' safety. By observing safe work practices and forklift operating procedures, workers can avoid most lift truck accidents. Using common sense when walking around forklifts also aids in preventing mishaps.

Basic Operator Safety

When operating a forklift, the operator is responsible for its safe operation. This begins with a daily checklist – completed at the beginning of each shift – to be certain the machine is safe to operate. Any problems should be corrected before the machine is used. The operator should always wear a safety belt and any other required safety equipment. He should always be certain that he has a clear path of travel, should not overload the equipment, and should sound the horn when nearing an intersection or working around pedestrians. The operator must always be aware of any hazards unique to the workplace, such as ramps or overhead obstructions. Forklifts should only be used by trained and certified operators.

General Safety Tips

- To protect operator and pedestrian alike, perform pre-operation checks specified in the operator's manual before starting each forklift job.
- A lift truck's back wheels control the steering and loads are carried while traveling forward or reverse; this may cause the truck to swing in the opposite direction from what may be expected by a pedestrian.
- Bumps and obstacles in the forklift's path may make the load unstable and it can be dumped.
- Pedestrians may not be aware of lowered forks, even when truck is parked.
- Pedestrians can become unexpected obstacles when they appear suddenly around a corner.
- A rule of thumb for workers and lift trucks alike: if it isn't moving, it shouldn't be in the aisle.
- Follow all company policies regarding right of way and traffic patterns.
- Remember that lift truck operators need adequate time to adjust speed and to determine alternative paths; maintain a safe distance between lift trucks.
- Approach blind intersections carefully to avoid collisions; lift operators must stop and sound the horn before entering any intersection.
- In areas where more than one truck is operating, the driver should face the direction of travel and keep three truck lengths away from other trucks.
- Operators should drive at posted speeds and at speeds appropriate for the conditions of the truck, load, and area of travel.



- Never use a lift truck to push or town another truck.
- Keep arms, legs and head inside the lift truck while traveling.
- Be aware of pedestrians in front and back of the truck. Never drive directly toward pedestrians.
- Operators should elevate forks and extensive above the travel surface to avoid obstacles.
- Make sure loads are stacked properly before moving them.

Protecting the Operator in a Tip-Over Situation

When a forklift tips over, the greatest danger to the operator is being crushed by the overhead guard. This is made far more likely if the operator attempts to jump clear of the machine. So, the most important safety rule is: Do not jump. Firmly grip the steering wheel. Brace your feet. Lean away from the direction of the fall. If you remain in the operator compartment, your risk of injury drops dramatically; the use of a safety belt is also important.

Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrians must be aware of rules to keep themselves out of danger. It has been estimated that co-workers, not operators, sustain 60% of injuries/fatalities involving lift trucks!

Most pedestrian injuries result from the rear-end swing of the forklift. Pedestrians often forget that forklifts steer with their rear tires, resulting in a swing of the machine's rear. When the forklift turns, a pedestrian can be struck and even pinned against a wall or another object, resulting in serious injury or death. Operators should not assume that pedestrians will remain clear. An operator should use the horn signal to alert pedestrians and other operators when it is backing up. It is vital for the operator to always maintain a clear path of travel.

The following tips raise awareness for pedestrians who may be working near forklift operators:

- Pedestrians should stop or slow down at blind intersections.
- Pedestrians should stay out of the path of the lift truck no matter who has the right of way.
- Watch for the forks of the lift truck as well as movements that may endanger you as you walk.
- Never ride on any part of the lift truck except in the operator's seat.
- Never engage in horseplay in areas where lift trucks are operating.
- Always establish and keep eye contact with the forklift operator. If he knows you are in the area, he will be more cautious and slow down to avoid collisions.
- Keep a safe distance from the truck and avoid getting between the truck and a large solid object with a narrow distance. Solid objects could be racking systems or walls.



- Don't make the assumption the operator saw you just because he looked in your direction.
It is recommended to wave to the operator and receive a physical or verbal acknowledgement.
- Be aware of the tail swing of the rear of the forklift. Forklifts are designed to make tight radius turns and often the non-operator employee is not aware of this unique turning ability and gets too close at the wrong time.
- If lifting is taking place make certain to provide a large margin of safety in the area called the "potential fall zone". It is recommended that a potential fall zone area around the forklift can be established of equal to twice the height of the carried load. For extra protection safety cones can be used to mark off "no pedestrian zones".
- Never walk or stand under raised forks. It doesn't matter that they are empty without a load. You cannot predict when a fall could occur without warning.