

## The Basics Of Forklift Safety



**FORKLIFT TRAINING SYSTEMS**

## What is a Powered Industrial Truck?

A mobile, power-driven vehicle used to carry, push, pull, lift, stack, or tier material.



## How Big Is The Forklift Safety Problem?

What do 85 deaths and 96,000+ injuries look like?



**85 lives**



**96,000+ injuries**

## Startling Stats

- Over 11% of the forklifts in the U.S. will be involved in an accident each year! (Assuming only one accident per forklift)
- 90% of all forklifts will be involved in some type of accident during their useful life! (Assuming a useful life of approximately 8 years)

Source: OSHA

## Do Your Operators Understand Their Personal Liability?



This forklift operator from Ohio was found guilty of reckless homicide for driving with his forward view blocked, driving with his forks too high and of failing to stop at crosswalks/stop signs. He struck a pedestrian, dragging him and causing massive head trauma/death. A review of video footage in the hours prior to the accident showed reckless driving, as did post accident interviews with co-workers. He was sentenced to 30 months in prison as a result of his actions.

(Source: Marysville Journal-Tribune)

## Exclusions

- Excluded are vehicles intended primarily for earth moving or over-the-road hauling, even if they carry forks.
- Personnel and burden carriers are also not covered per OSHA Directive Number: CPL 2-1.28A



## OSHA Forklift Focus

The top five citations issued for 29CFR1910.178:

### Related to training:

- Failure to ensure operator competency
- Failure to certify operator's training and evaluation
- Failure to provide refresher training and evaluation

### Related to maintenance:

- Failure to examine forklifts before placing them in service
- Failure to take damaged forklifts out of service

## Training Program Implementation

Trainees may operate a forklift only:

- Under the direct supervision of persons who have the knowledge, training and experience to train operators and evaluate their competence.
- Where such operation does not endanger the trainee or other employees.



## Three Year Re-evaluations

Mandatory:

1. Must be completed at least once every three years.
2. Must test hands on skill – driving evaluation
3. Must test knowledge – ask questions or do short class

Suggestions:

1. Cover topics your operators are struggling with: staying focused, pedestrian safety, pre shift checks, etc.
2. Don't do the exact same thing every time. Use new materials, bring in a guest speaker, change up the driving course, hold a rodeo, etc. This is a golden opportunity to improve forklift safety!

## Refresher Training

In short, it only occurs if the operator has an accident/near miss or is observed operating unsafely. It is also required if the truck type or operating environment changes.

Mandatory:

Provide refresher training and an evaluation to ensure its effectiveness.

Suggestions:

1. Don't put the operator back through your entire forklift safety program if they have an accident or near miss. Sit down with them and discuss the real issues: What happened, what factors caused the incident and how do we prevent it from happening again?
2. Do a performance evaluation of the operator to ensure they know how to do it right and document the whole process.

## Attention HR Managers

We get daily calls from unemployed people wanting us help them obtain a piece of paper which says they can drive a forklift, so they can apply for higher paying jobs. Many have no prior experience. We won't train them due to OSHA's site specific requirements, but some training companies will. In as little as 2 hours they may have a card that says they are an operator. They can also obtain these on the internet in only minutes. BEWARE, these cards mean very little, real prior experience means everything.

Ask the right questions & verify experience when you hire:

What is your prior forklift driving experience, if any? How long ago was it, how much did you drive daily and for how many years, what types of forklifts did you use and in what applications, who can verify this for us?

## Have Some Rules Become Optional?



## How Safe Are Your Forklifts?



Do you have a good system in place for documenting pre shift inspections on every forklift and every shift?

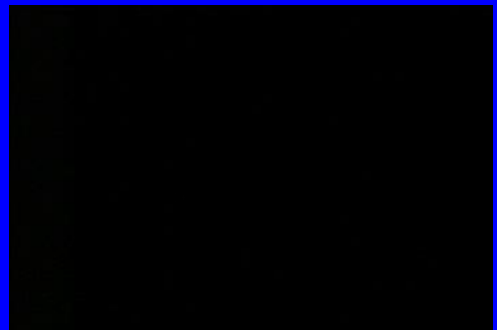
## Are The Manual And Warning Labels Present And Readable?



## Are Your People Working Safely?



## Are Your Forklift Processes And Procedures Well Thought Out & Safe?



## Do Not Modify Any Forklift Without Written Approval From The Manufacturer



Forklift “man cages” are a bad idea for many reasons, we highly suggest you not use them. If you don’t have the manufacturer’s written approval they are illegal to use.



Citation 1 Item 14. Type of Violation: **Serious**

29 CFR 1910.178(a)(4): Modifications and additions which affect capacity and safe operation of powered industrial truck were performed by the employer without the manufacturer's prior written approval.

a) Throughout Facility, 80 & 100 S. Dean Street: A man cage, attached and elevated by company forklifts, was used without having forklift manufacturer's prior written approval, on or about 3/5/2013.

## Stand Up “Under ride”

Stand up “under ride” can pin an operator, depending on your rack design and layout. OSHA has a special web page on it due to the number of injuries and fatalities it has caused.

Using two rear posts on your stand up forklift, or rack beams positioned at the right height, are potential solutions to the problem.



**Do You Have 100% Seatbelt Compliance? An operator in Columbus was killed in late 2017 in a tip-over.**



## Medical Qualifications For Forklift Operators – Fact or Fiction?

1. Federal OSHA does not list any physical qualifications for forklift operators. Does this mean everyone is physically able to safely use a forklift? NO
2. The ADA prohibits discrimination based on physical limitations and expects employers to accommodate those with limitations whenever possible. Does this mean everyone is physically able to safely use a forklift? NO
3. What does ANSI say? “Only trained and authorized persons shall be permitted to operate a powered industrial truck. Operators of powered industrial trucks shall be qualified as to visual, auditory, physical, and mental ability to operate the equipment safely.” Although this standard is not enforced by OSHA it is certainly a “best practice.”

## Medical Qualifications For Forklift Operators – Fact or Fiction?

### Suggestions:

1. If you have a written policy which states your operators must have a valid automobile driver’s license, then you have at least some documentation of their basic minimum physical qualifications, but this is not foolproof, since some people do not have a driver’s license and even if they do, this does not ensure they will be physically qualified to operate your forklifts safely.
2. Consult with your company doctor and lawyer for their input.
3. Whenever possible, try to accommodate any special needs, but don’t forget common sense.

## Do You Have A Electronic Device Policy For Forklift Operators And Pedestrians?

If not, here are some suggestions:



1. Do not allow mobile equipment operators to even carry cell phones, radios or electronic devices of any kind. There is no reason for them to be carrying these in the first place, it can cause distracted driving and also a loss of productivity.
2. Consider banning both the carrying and use of cell phones and other electronic devices by pedestrians in areas where forklifts are in use. In our opinion there is no reason for the average production worker or visitor to be carrying devices in these areas. A back up plan would be to enforce a strict policy of no use when walking or when in areas where forklifts travel.



## Be On The Lookout For New Types Of Safety Technology



**When an forklift incident happens, how much do you learn from it? See how many issues you can find in this clip.**



**Did You Catch All The Contributing Factors?**

1. Angry with boss, adrenaline is pumping.
2. Hurrying to complete work and go home.
3. Speeding?
4. Not looking in the direction of travel.
5. Lack of focus on driving forklift.
6. Hanging foot out of truck.
7. Pallets stacked in aisle (bad housekeeping) force truck out of normal path of travel.
8. Other?

---

**FORKLIFT TRAINING SYSTEMS**

**Questions?**

Thanks for your time! Contact us at  
740-763-4978 or [info@forklifttrainingsystem.com](mailto:info@forklifttrainingsystem.com)  
if we can answer any questions or assist you in any  
way.