



## Best Practices – Safety Matters

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### Safety Matters from IMA

Every month, IMA's Risk Control Team publishes a newsletter on Safety Matters. With topics ranging from Post-Accident Drug Testing to Workplace Violence, the topics are timely and relevant to creating a safe work environment. This month's topic focused on operating forklifts:

#### Powered Industrial Trucks

A 42-year old manufacturing worker was killed in a forklift accident in New Jersey a few years ago. The employee had not been trained to operate a forklift and was driving one at unsafe speeds. He cut one corner too quickly and the forklift tipped over, crushing him under the roll cage. He was also not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the accident. Driving a forklift may seem similar to driving a car, but they are very different. It is critical that employees are trained on how to use a forklift to avoid accidents.

#### Forklifts Can Cause Accidents

Forklifts, unlike cars and trucks, often steer with rear wheels and can tip over easily. Operators or nearby workers can be injured or even killed if a forklift:

- Tips Over
- Falls off a loading dock
- Collides with or drops a load on equipment, a vehicle, or another person
- Has someone jump on or off it or places his or her arms or legs on the outside of it
- Is improperly refueled or recharged, or if a forklift is being operated in an area with hazardous substances

#### Requirements

OSHA requires that forklift operators be specially trained and authorized. The authorized operator must know the following: forklift types, uses, designs, limitations, parts and inspection procedures, safe loading, unloading, operating, parking and refueling procedures.



## **Forklift Inspections**

Forklifts should be inspected daily or before each shift if the forklift is used continuously throughout the shift. Operators should never use a forklift that is damaged or not operating properly. While using a forklift, the operator should use required protection, including: seat belts (if installed); sturdy shoes with nonskid soles; safety glasses; hearing protection; gloves or other PPE required for a job.

## **General Safety Rules**

- Never attempt stunt driving. Do not engage in horseplay while operating a forklift.
- Keep arms, hands and legs inside the truck.
- Keep an eye out for surface holes, uneven patches and overhead clearances.
- Do not drive up to a person standing in front of a bench or any fixed object.

## **Operators must follow all traffic rules. Remember the following:**

- Obey speed limits.
- Drive in the assigned lane or on the right.
- Yield the right of way to pedestrians and emergency vehicles.
- Sound the horn at intersections.
- Stay at least three truck lengths behind the vehicle in front of you.
- Stay at a safe distance from ramp or platform edges.
- Slow down for turns.
- Stop before going into reverse.
- Do not pass at intersections or blind spots.

## **Forklifts are not casual transport:**

- No one is permitted to ride directly on the truck's forks.
- No one can stand or walk under elevated forklift parts, even if they are empty.
- Only authorized employees should ride forklift trucks.
- Passengers may ride only on forklifts properly designed to carry them.

*Please reach out to Nick Burns ([nick.burns@imacorp.com](mailto:nick.burns@imacorp.com)) to get added to IMA's Safety Matters Newsletter, highlighting current news and training topics for Manufacturers.*