

Forklift Safety

Although forklifts are useful in moving heavy materials, we should never forget that they are potentially very dangerous pieces of equipment. Every year thousands of workers are injured, and some are even killed, in forklift accidents

Hazards of working around forklifts

- The most common type of accident is one in which an employee is **struck by** a forklift. These accidents are serious; forklifts are much heavier than the average automobile because the weight is needed to counter-balance heavy loads.
- One danger is getting **caught between** a forklift and a structure like a wall or rack and crushed.
- You could also be **struck by object** falling due to an unstable load.
- Another hazard is having your foot **run over** by the wheels.
- If you're standing on the forks, you could also lose your balance and **fall to the ground**.

Factors that can cause forklift accidents

- "Blind spots" that can limit an operator's view along with other obstructions, such as pallets, storage racks, and columns.
- Corners and blind intersections.
- Employees being too close to the forklift.
- Employees in a hurry who try to cross in front or behind a moving forklift.
- Operating the vehicle too fast or not looking behind and sounding horns when backing.
- Employees and forklifts sharing a confined area requiring crossing "travel" lanes.
- The beginning and end of shifts. During that time, workers are on the move, people may not be as alert, and separation of pedestrians and forklifts may not be as clearly defined.

Tips for safe operation of forklifts

- Always wear a seat belt when in operation.
- Follow speed limits (or slower when conditions call for it) and maintain a speed that will allow you to stop as needed.
- Drive in the designated lane.
- Maintain focus on your travel route and keep it clearly in view at all times.
- Keep alert for pedestrians walking or working in the area.
- Yield right-of-way to pedestrians.
- Be cautious when passing so that your view is unobstructed.
- Slow down and sound horn at intersections or places with poor visibility.
- Sound horn when a worker may not know that a forklift is moving in their direction.
- Do not operate close to pedestrians.
- Slow down when making turns to avoid a tipover or collisions with structures and other forklifts.
- Stop before moving into reverse to check that the travel route is clear.
- Turn off the engine, set the brake, and remove the key when you park a forklift.

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: fwcruminsurance.com