

Forklift Safety

Fact: Forklift accidents account for a large percentage of all industrial accidents each year in Australia. In the last five years alone there have been almost 3000 forklift related injuries reported.



General Safety Tips

Managers/supervisors should always conduct a risk assessment to identify and control any hazards associated with using a forklift in the particular situation.

Safety Checks

- Before you begin your shift each day you should check to ensure that your forklift is in good working order and that any problems are recorded for further action on a 'Pre-Start Checklist Form'
- If any items require maintenance, they must be reported to your supervisor.
- Only qualified persons can carry out maintenance and repairs on forklift trucks.

Forklift Speed

- You should always adhere to any speed restriction signs or company policy and procedures on forklift speed. Other considerations include the size of the load you are carrying and the layout of the workplace.
- You must travel at a speed that allows you to stop safely.

Moving the Load

Know the area you are going to be moving the load around in. Be aware of the following:

- Height restrictions
- Position of pipes
- Location of power lines
- Low or narrow doorways
- Blind corners
- Surfaces you will be driving on
- Pedestrian walkways



If you come into contact with powerlines, stay inside the forklift truck until the power can be disconnected. If you touch the ground and the forklift at the same time, you can be electrocuted.

Setting up the load

- It is essential that the load on the pallet is stable and well stacked before it is lifted and moved.
- Make sure that the pallet is in good working order. Broken pallets should not be used.
- The weight of the load should not exceed the Safe Working Limit (SWL), which should be indicated on a panel on the forklift truck near the drivers seat.
- Make sure the heaviest objects in the load are at the bottom of the load and nearest the back plate of the forks.
- Make sure the forks are adjusted as wide as possible to fit under the load.
- Keep the mast in an upright position.
- Level the forks to the correct height before inserting into the pallet.
- Insert the forks all the way into the pallet making sure that the pallet is evenly placed.
- Make sure the forklift is stopped before raising the load.
- Raise the load and tilt the mast back.
- Keep the forks as low as possible when transporting the load, below the level of the axles if possible. If you cannot see past the load, travel in the reverse direction or have a competent person lead you.
- Travel at an appropriate speed, remembering that it takes time to stop a loaded forklift.
- Don't turn on a slope you may over balance.
- Don't stop abruptly as the load may shift.
- Don't drive on uneven ground; unless the forklift is designed for working outside on rough terrain, if you need to cross a railway line, cross at an angle to ensure one wheel at a time is raised.
- When transporting a load on an incline always travel forwards up the incline and backwards down the incline. If the forklift is empty or unloaded, travel with the forks facing downhill, this means travelling in reverse up the incline and forwards down the incline.
- When the load is to be moved across a public road or pathway, barriers should be in place and a competent person must control traffic.

Lifting Persons

If a person is to be lifted by the forklift, a safety cage or a forklift platform must be fitted to the forks. The forklift must not travel while a person is in the working platform, it is to be on firm level ground, the handbrake is to be fully engaged, the drive controls are to be in neutral, the operator is to remain at the controls for the entire time the person is raised, the platform must be kept horizontal.

Lifting Accessories

When using jibs and slings it is essential not to exceed the Working Load Limits (WWL) of the equipment.

Refuelling Safety

Refuelling must be carried out in well-ventilated areas away from any possible sources of ignition.

Changing LP Gas Cylinders

Steps for changing a LP Gas Cylinder:

1. Wear appropriate clothing
2. Turn off the cylinder valve
3. Turn off engine and allow to run until stopped
4. Disconnect the take-off hose
5. Remove safety strapping and remove cylinder
6. Fit new cylinder
7. Connect safety straps
8. Connect take off hose
9. Turn on valve
10. Check for leaks-look, listen and smell.

Battery Safety

Batteries contain sulphuric acid and should only be handled by authorised personnel. When you handle batteries you should wear the following PPE, eye protection, gloves, acid resistant boots, face mask and a protective apron.

Eyewash and emergency wash stations should be available in areas where batteries are handled

Legislation

Work Health and Safety Act 2011(Qld)

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld)

Risk Management Code of Practice 2007

AS 2359.1 Powered industrial trucks Part 1: General requirements