

Forklifts: Safe Operators, Clear Paths, Secure Parking

COMPANY

PROJECT

DATE

PRESENTED BY

Moving materials puts forklift operators, delivery crews, and workers on foot in the same work area. A load can block the operator's view, and equipment can move while someone is nearby. Safe operation starts before the truck moves and continues until it is parked securely.

Start with a qualified operator and safe equipment

- OSHA requires forklift operators to complete training and evaluation before operating, except during supervised training. Being able to drive other equipment does not by itself qualify someone to operate a forklift.
- Trainees must work under direct supervision from someone qualified to train and evaluate them. Operators need instruction on the truck's warnings, precautions, and operating manual, not just a quick explanation of the controls.
- A different type of truck or an evaluation showing unsafe operation calls for refresher training and evaluation. OSHA also requires an operator performance evaluation at least once every three years.
- Before moving materials, look for damage or problems that could make operation unsafe. If a forklift needs repair or is defective or unsafe, stop, report it, and keep it out of service until restored to safe condition.

Keep workers and loads out of trouble

- Plan the material route before starting. Look for workers on foot, blocked views, and places where lifting or hauling equipment shares space with other trades; pause when the path is not clear.
- Do not give unauthorized riders a lift on the forklift. When riding is authorized, the rule requires a safe place to ride; forks and loads are not a place to improvise a seat.
- Forklifts that lift high with the operator riding on them must have an overhead guard, a strong roof over the operator. Check that the guard is in place, and report any damage instead of assuming it will still protect the operator.
- If two or more trucks lift a load together, the share each truck carries must stay within its capacity.

Park so the truck cannot move

- When you step off but stay within 25 feet with the truck in view, fully lower the forks, put the controls in neutral, and set the brakes. Don't leave the forks raised while you step away to help unload.
- Treat the truck as unattended when you are 25 feet or more away, even if you can see it. Also treat it as unattended any time you leave it and can't see it.
- For an unattended truck, fully lower the forks, neutralize controls, shut off power, and set the brakes. Block the wheels if parked on an incline.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

An operator steps off with the forks raised to check a delivery behind a wall. A worker asks for a ride back. What should the operator do before walking away, and how should the ride request be handled?

Questions for the crew

1. What makes a forklift unattended?

2. What do you do with an unsafe truck?
3. Who may operate a forklift during training?

Use trained operators, stop unsafe equipment, and secure the forklift every time you step off.

Sources: 29 CFR 1910.178, Powered industrial trucks; 29 CFR 1926.602, Material handling equipment

Drafted with AI for review by a competent person. Clever Rook writes from the official regulation text it cites, but it doesn't know your site. Check it against your conditions and your company's safety program before use. Not legal advice.

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REVIEWED BY (COMPETENT PERSON)

REVIEW DATE

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