

## **Topic: Forklift Safety**

### **How to Improve Pedestrian Safety around Forklifts**

Forklifts are a common vehicle in worksites where materials need to be raised, lowered or moved. There are many types of these powered industrial trucks and each type has its own operating hazard. But one of the most common causes of forklift-related fatalities is striking a worker who is on foot.

Because of the hazards posed to pedestrians, forklifts must only be operated by someone who has successfully completed training. However, the responsibility for pedestrian safety does not lie with the forklift operator alone. It is also the responsibility of those who work in areas where forklifts are operating.

### **Example**

A warehouse receiving clerk and a forklift operator, both 18 years old and both new employees, were working together to prepare merchandise for storage and shipment. The forklift operator loaded a pallet and began backing down the aisle at a slight angle. He saw the warehouse clerk walking up the aisle toward him. The operator made eye contact with the clerk and yelled to him to get out of the way. The forklift operator hit the brakes and tried to steer away, but it was too late. The forklift struck the clerk and pinned him against a metal shelf. He died on the way to the hospital of severe blunt chest trauma.

### **How to stay safe around forklifts**

When you work around or near forklifts, be mindful of these pedestrian safety rules:

- If at all possible, stay away from areas where forklifts are operating.
- If you must enter the area, inform the forklift operator of your intent to enter the area.
- Wait to receive an acknowledgement from the operator that he or she understands your intention to enter the area.
- Wear a high-visibility vest.
- If pedestrian and forklift traffic is separated, follow the designated walkways.
- Listen for forklift horns, especially at intersections, blind corners and narrow aisles or other areas where vision is obscured.
- Report to your supervisor any poorly lit areas or any obstructions in aisles or intersections.
- Keep a safe distance from a forklift, whenever possible.
- Do not walk near or under raised forks.
- Do not ride on a forklift's load.
- Do not engage in horseplay near or around forklifts.
- Remember that forklifts cannot and should not stop abruptly. The braking distance of a forklift depends on the speed it is traveling and the load it is carrying. Pedestrians often underestimate the stopping distance of a fully loaded forklift. If an operator does abruptly stop the forklift, there is a risk of the load shifting and falling off or the forklift tipping over.

# TOOLBOX TALKS



Watch out for each other. A high incidence of forklift-related injuries and fatalities occur during the first month of employment. If you observe a new co-worker approaching a forklift without making his presence known, speak up. Explain why this is unsafe and report the incident to your supervisor so that refresher training can be arranged.

## Conclusion

When working around or near forklifts, do not place your safety solely in the hands of the forklift operator. Do all you can to stay away from the forklift and to be visible to the operator.

## Quiz:

1. After indicating to a forklift operator that you intend to enter the area, you should wait to receive \_\_\_\_\_ from the operator.
2. A high incidence of forklift-related injuries and fatalities occur during the first month of employment. True or False
3. Which of the following might occur if an operator has to abruptly stop a fully loaded forklift?
  - a. the load might slide off
  - b. the forklift might tip over
  - c. both of the above
  - d. none of the above
4. It is safe to walk under raised forks. True or False
5. Poorly lit areas in the worksite should be \_\_\_\_\_.

## Answers:

- 1 an okay or an acknowledgement, 2 True, 3 c, 4 False, 5 Reported to the supervisor