

FORKLIFTS

1. Task

Safe operation of forklift equipment on construction sites.

2. Hazards

Overloading the lift, insecure loads, careless driving, unsafe driving conditions, i.e. uneven or slippery (icy) soft ground, struck by – crushed by injuries, property damage.

3. Controls

Pre-Job Safety Assessment (PSA). Adequately trained workers (c/w documentation), manufacturer's specifications, CSA/ANSI approved equipment, regular inspection and maintenance program.

- ❖ Only adequately, competent workers are to operate forklifts. They are powerful and potentially hazardous mobile equipment and must be treated as such.
- ❖ Operators **MUST** always wear their seatbelt when operating the forklift.
- ❖ Operating surfaces are important in the safe operation of forklifts. Ground, wherever possible, must be level, free of holes, and as dry as possible, noted, this cannot always happen. If the ground is muddy, wet or icy, the operator **MUST** take extra care when operating his machine and he must know when to shut the machine down. Also, the operator must be aware of overhead hazards, i.e. electrical lines, lights and utility pipes.
- ❖ **DO NOT** operate gas- or diesel-powered forklifts in enclosed or confined spaces without proper scrubbers or exhaust ventilation system. The build-up of carbon monoxide and/or Nitrogen Dioxide can be deadly. (Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless poisonous gas.) Choose alternative power source such as electric or propane in enclosed spaces – monitor for explosive or poisonous atmosphere if operating in a confined space.
- ❖ **DO NOT** operate forklift beyond manufacturer's recommendations. Do not try to lift more weight than it is rated for. This may cause the forklift to tip.
- ❖ A legible copy of the operator's manual must always be kept on the equipment.
- ❖ Always inspect the forklift before you operate it. Look for things like cracked or broken lines. Are there any puddles of fluid under the forklift? Are the tires flat? If there are any defective or broken parts on the forklift, **DO NOT OPERATE** the forklift, report to supervisor. Defective or broken parts may cause severe injury or death.
- ❖ Ensure that qualified, competent workers do all maintenance. Do not perform duties that are outside your scope of work.
- ❖ **MAKE SURE THAT THE AUDIBLE BACK UP ALARM IS IN WORKING ORDER.** In Alberta, all mobile equipment over 6000 kg, or has limited visibility, **MUST** have an audible back-up alarm or a competent flag person must help back up the machine.
- ❖ Operators must be aware of their surroundings. Are there any obstacles? Is there pedestrian traffic? Be aware of your blind spots. Is there enough room to operate the machine safely?
- ❖ **DO NOT ALLOW ANY RIDERS ON THE FORKS.** The forklift is not a taxi; it is made for materials, not people. Operators, who do not follow the rules, will be subject to disciplinary action. **NO PASSENGERS ON MACHINES.**
- ❖ Operators must handle each load differently, not all loads are the same. Watch for things like the height of the load (top heavy), the position of the load on the forks, the speed you are traveling, and the center of gravity of the load.
- ❖ On some loads, because of the size of cargo, visibility may be obstructed. At these times, the operator **MUST** stop and have a flag person to help guide the forklift.
- ❖ Watch for steep grades. These may require the operator to travel backwards; again, an adequately trained flag person may be required. (Flag persons are to **NEVER** stand directly behind the forklift.) **NEVER** turn on ramps, slopes or inclines, this may cause the forklift to turn over, wait until the ground is level before turning around.
- ❖ **NEVER**, at any time, stand underneath the forks, the hydraulics may fail, and this would result in severe injury or death.



Best Personnel Safe Work Practices & Procedures Manual

- ❖ NEVER move unstable loads. If the load cannot be lifted safely, you may be required to restack the load. It is the operator's responsibility to determine if a load is safe to lift or not. DO NOT be pressured into lifting something that you are unsure is safe or not.
- ❖ Stunt driving, horseplay, speeding or any other unsafe driving, WILL NOT BE TOLERATED, and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- ❖ When the machine is parked, the forks must be on the ground.
- ❖ Do not leave the machine unattended if it is running.
- ❖ All manufacturer's warning labels and placards must always be observed.
- ❖ In the event of a forklift rollover, the operator should stay inside the cab for protection.
- ❖ Ensure all labels are legible.
- ❖ Never remove an overhead protection device.
- ❖ All loads are to be properly secured.