



Work Instructions: Operating Forklifts

Overview

Purpose	To describe the rules for operating forklifts, including charging batteries; these are designed to prevent accidents and comply with regulations.
Scope	This applies to all forklifts.
Audience	All forklift users and their supervisors; members of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Department

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Policy

Operating Rules

Forklifts must be operated according to OSHA's forklift operating rules and the requirements of this policy.

Operating Requirements

Speed Limits

- The speed limit inside a building is 3 miles per hour, which is the speed a person walks.
 - When driving outdoors, make sure the mast and chains do not shake or wobble. If they do, the speed is too high.
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Load Capacity

- Never exceed the rated lifting capacity of the forklift, which is shown on a plate on the forklift.
 - If you are unsure of the weight of the load, test to see whether the forklift can handle it by:
 - Putting the blade into the load
 - Placing the heaviest part of the load closest to the mast
 - Tilting the blades and see whether the forklift can handle it
 - Lifting the load 6 inches to see whether the forklift can handle it
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Pedestrians

- Pedestrians always have the right of way.
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Corners & Intersections

- Slow down and beep the horn when approaching corners or blind intersections.
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Trucks & Trailers

- Avoid driving a forklift onto a truck or trailer. Use a pallet jack instead, or attach a chain to the load and pull it to the edge of the truck or trailer with the forklift.
 - If a forklift must enter a truck or trailer follow these steps:
 - Place wheel chocks under the truck or trailer wheels.
 - Be sure trailers are secured to the truck.
 - If there is no cab, check the condition of the landing gear. If it is not in good condition, **DO NOT ENTER** the trailer.
 - Go under the truck or trailer and inspect the bed. If it is broken, cracked or otherwise damaged do not enter.
 - Dock plates must stick 2 to 4 inches into the truck or trailer.
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Blades

- Keep the blades as low as possible when driving. They should never be more than 6 inches above the ground.
 - Be sure the blades are centered and secured in place.
 - Do not tilt the blades forward except to deposit a load
 - Tilt the blades back slightly after picking up a load and when moving a load.
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Driving Backwards

- Beep the horn before moving backwards.
 - Never back up without first looking over both shoulders.
 - Drivers must turn their heads from side to side and look over both shoulders when backing up.
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Moving Tall Loads

- The driver must be able to see where he or she is going. If the load is tall, travel in reverse (unless going uphill).
 - If the driver must move a tall load uphill, break the load down so he or she can see over it.
 - Never use a person as a spotter.
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Moving Loose Loads

- Never move a load of loose material.
 - Tie loose items or use shrink-wrap. If this cannot be done, then put the items in boxes or move them with hand trucks.
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Road Surfaces

- Drive straight over speed bumps, so that both front wheels go over the bump at the same time.
 - Never drive over gratings, manhole covers, trench plates or other items that could break or slip.
 - When driving on roadways, stay toward the center and keep away from edges where the road is rounded.
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Grades & Ramps

- When moving uphill without a load, drive backward.
 - When moving uphill with a load, drive forward.
 - When moving downhill with a load, drive backward.
 - When moving downhill without a load, drive forward.
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Driving Through Curtains

- It is often difficult to see through door curtains or strips. Try to back through these instead of driving forward.
 - Always beep the horn before going through curtains or strips
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Parking

- To park the forklift, place the forks on the floor, shut off power, put it in neutral, set the hand brake and remove the key.
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Following Another Forklift

- When following another forklift, stay at least 3 forklift lengths or 3 seconds behind.
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Accidents

Crashes

- Do not swerve to avoid a rear end collision. Swerving could cause the load to tip and the forklift to roll over.
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Rollovers

- If the forklift rolls over, DO NOT JUMP OUT (you could get crushed). Stay inside and hold on.
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Batteries

Check Water Level

Step	Action
1	Put on goggles and butyl gloves.
2	Open the cap and check the water level.
3	The water should cover the plates.
4	If the water is low, charge the battery <u>and then</u> add water (wear goggles, a faceshield, butyl gloves and an apron when adding water.)



Charging

DANGER - batteries can release hydrogen gas during charging. Hydrogen is a flammable gas that can explode if ignited by flames or sparks!

Step	Action
1	Lift the seat to expose the battery.
2	Tighten the battery caps.
3	Charge the battery.
4	When fully charged, shut off charger <u>and then</u> unplug the cable. DO NOT UNPLUG THE CABLE WHILE CHARGING.

Battery Acid Burns

Batteries contain corrosive acid. This can burn eyes and skin.

Step	Action
1	Yell for help.
2	Use the eyewash or shower for at least 15 minutes.
3	Get outside medical attention.
4	Throwaway clothing contaminated with battery acid.

Battery Acid Spills

- Only trained members of the Emergency Response Team (ERT) are allowed to clean up battery acid spills.
- Use your in-house number to activate your ERT

Associated Documents

"Policy: Forklifts"

