

# OPERATING AND DRIVING THE FORKLIFT

The forklift driver has a responsible and challenging job. That's why government safety regulations require that you be licensed and trained.

Forklift and trailer loading accidents are among the highest in the industry and are on the increase. To stop this trend, most companies require:

- Driver applicants with a mature attitude and a good vehicle driving record.
- Good vision, hearing and health.
- A driving refresher course every two years.
- A consistently good attitude about safety.

## Respect Your Truck

At eight tons, your forklift weighs two to three times more than the family car. It steers from the rear. It's tall and tipsy. When loaded, your vision is often cut off.

Responsible forklift operators:

- Wear safety belt, goggles, hat, shoes and other equipment.
- Concentrate on the work or take a break.
- Inspect the forklift before operating.
- Inspect the condition of pallets and cargo before loading.
- Inspect trailer-to-dock levelers and vehicle restraints.
- Plan a route to avoid obstacles, hazards and blind spots.
- Observe speed and traffic restrictions.

The most common forklift accidents involve co-workers who are run over by careless drivers.

## Drive Defensively

Forklift hazards include overhangs, chuck holes, warehouse spills, pedestrian traffic, blind corners and other vehicles. Standard good driving techniques include:

- Lights on in dim areas.
- Honk and slow at blind corners.
- Speed limits of 6 to 9 miles per hour.
- Following distance of three vehicle lengths.
- Drive in reverse when front view is blocked.
- Stay to right if two lanes; in center if one.
- Complete stop before adjusting forks or load.
- Forks no more than six inches high at all times.
- Balanced loads, within vehicle and floor capacity.

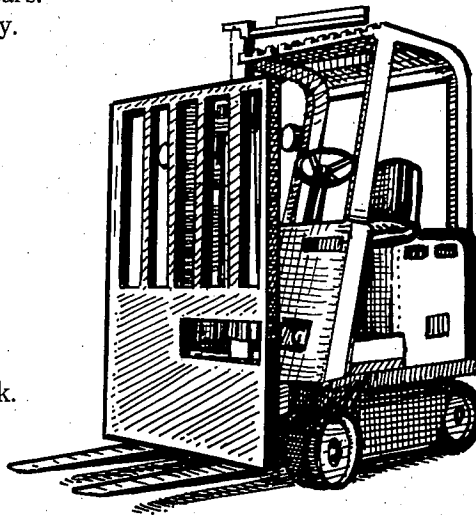
- On grades of more than 10 percent, use forward up and reverse down.
- Load control with smooth stops and starts.
- Slow, wide turns.

## Safety Reserves

To be prepared for your challenges, your equipment must be regularly maintained. Your preload check includes:

- Brakes and steering.
- Fork pins and stops.
- Cowling and body parts.
- Wheels and tires.
- Liquid levels.
- Air cleaner and belts.
- Hour meter and lights.
- Gauges.
- Horn.
- Lift system controls.
- Backup alarm.
- Fire extinguisher.

If it's your job to refuel or recharge, remember to do it with engine off and no smoking.



## Loading

Specifications on your vehicle tell you the maximum weight your forklift is designed to handle. Select the correct attachment and inspect the pallets before loading. Remember these rules:

- Load no higher than the backrest.
- Insert forks completely through pallets.
- Carry low and tilt forks back.
- Center and balance wide loads.
- Avoid poorly or unevenly packed material.
- Avoid using the overhead guard.
- Correct slack lift chains by repeat raising and lowering.

## Professional Performance

Forklifts make a lot of loading jobs easier. Once you learn the skills required to operate your vehicle, you can help make materials handling safer, too.

For lift truck drivers, solid professionalism is the key to safe performance.