



Safety Bulletin

Separating Pedestrians and Forklifts

A high percentage of accidents involving forklifts also involve pedestrians. On average up to 50% of forklift accidents are pedestrian related, resulting in many serious injuries and fatalities every year. The most common pedestrian related accidents involve crushing, falling objects, and running over pedestrians' feet.

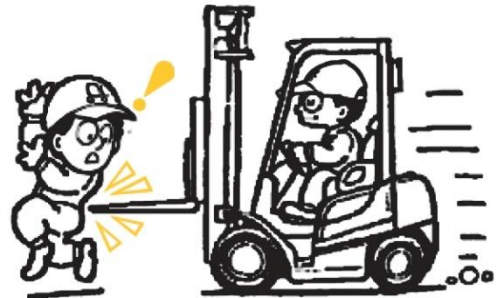
The best way to reduce these accidents is to effectively separate pedestrians and forklifts, and the best way to do that is to have an effective traffic management plan in place at your workplace. WorkCover NSW defines a traffic management plan as; "A set of rules for managing the safest and most efficient movement of traffic in your workplace." They recommend using the four **SAFE** Steps of hazard management, which consist of;

- **Spot the Hazard** – associated with the movement of forklifts, other vehicles and pedestrians.
- **Assess the Risk** – caused by these hazards.
- **Fix the Problem** – the most effective way to control risks is to eliminate them.
- **Evaluate Results** – ensure control measures have been implemented and are not creating new hazards.

WorkCover NSW suggests that the SAFE process be repeated at regular intervals.

There are many other factors to consider for your traffic management plan to ensure that forklifts and pedestrians are separated and their paths don't cross, including but not limited to;

- Create 'no go' zones for forklifts (pedestrian only areas).
- Create 'no go' zones for pedestrians (forklift only areas).
- Using safety signs, high impact physical safety barriers and boom gates.
- Using speed-limiting devices and implementing speed limits.
- Using a combination of audible (alarms and horns) and visual (flashing lights) warning devices and ensuring these are working when the forklift is operating.
- Providing high-visibility or reflective clothing for workers and operators and high-visibility markings for the forklift trucks.
- Work scheduling that prevents pedestrians being in the same area at the same time as operating forklifts.



A combined effort from operators, pedestrians and supervisors is needed to ensure that a separation of forklifts and pedestrians is achieved. Supervisors must ensure that employees observe exclusion zones and follow safety procedures at all times. Do not wait until an injury or death occurs at your workplace before separating pedestrians and forklifts.

All forklifts supplied by MLA Holdings are fitted with audible and visual warning devices. Options such as cameras and speed-limiting devices are also available.

Information for this article was sourced from www.workcover.nsw.gov.au and www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au. For more information on effective traffic management plans contact MLA Holdings on 131 652 or www.mlaholdings.com.au.