



Safety Bulletin

Safety for Forklift Operators

Forklifts are used in many workplaces to lift, stack and transfer loads. Unfortunately, they continue to cause workplace deaths and injuries resulting in substantial human and financial costs. Forklift incidents can be prevented, especially when workers and businesses work together to improve workplace health and safety.

Forklift dangers

As forklifts must be manoeuvrable, they are designed to be compact. This means they can become unstable when carrying a load. Fully laden, a standard 2 tonne forklift can weigh over 5 tonnes. With lower stability and greater manoeuvrability, combined with uncontrolled traffic areas in workplaces, it's easy to see how forklifts are often involved in incidents.



Training and qualifications

To operate a forklift in NSW you must have a high-risk work forklift licence. Training to get a high-risk work licence must be completed as part of a course from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

A person training to operate a forklift may operate a forklift at their workplace if they are:

- enrolled with an RTO to train as a forklift operator, and directly supervised while operating the forklift by a person who has both the right licence to perform the high-risk work and suitable workplace experience.

Operators should never drive a forklift if their forklift licence has expired.

Safety tips:

Operators have a responsibility to ensure a safe workplace. Operators must ensure they:

- wear Personal Protective Equipment, comply with reasonable instructions and training, follow safe work procedures and do not put themselves or co-workers at risk.
- report all incidents, near misses and hazards (including unsafe equipment) to their supervisor or Health and Safety representative.

To ensure operator safety and that of others, always drive and operate forklifts safely:

- wear a seatbelt, wear safety glasses to protect your eyes from dust and debris when moving stored products from overhead shelving.
- obey speed limits and warning signs, road surfaces and traffic conditions.
- always stay seated in the cabin and do not lean out of the forklift.

When operating a forklift:

- Lower the forklift tynes to ground level. Ensure the parking brake is set and the controls are in neutral.
- Work and park in well-lit areas so your vision of road surfaces and other traffic is clear.
- In the event of a tip-over, don't jump. Brace yourself with your feet pressing down, hold tight and lean in the opposite direction of tipping.
- Be aware of speed and stopping distance.
- Before operating a forklift first conduct a pre-start safety check. Report any damage or problems immediately.
- Get on and off safely - Do not jump from your forklift. Instead face the forklift and maintain three points of contact (hands and feet) when you get on and off.
- When you have finished work, before getting off the forklift, lower the forklift tines to ground level, ensure the parking break is engaged and the controls are in neutral.

Information for this article was sourced from www.sdan.org.au. For further forklift safety information contact MLA Holdings Pty Ltd on 131 652 or www.mlaholdings.com.au.

