



Each year, tens of thousands of injuries related to powered industrial trucks (PIT), or forklifts, occur in US workplaces. Many employees are injured when lift trucks are inadvertently driven off loading docks, lifts fall between docks and an unsecured trailer, they are struck by a lift truck, or when they fall while on elevated pallets and tines. Most incidents also involve property damage, including damage to overhead sprinklers, racking, pipes, walls, and machinery.

### When you operate or work near forklifts, take these steps to protect yourself.

- Do not operate a forklift unless you have been trained and licensed.
- Use seatbelts.
- Report to your supervisor any damage or problems that occur to a forklift during your shift.
- Do not jump from an overturning, sit-down type forklift. Stay with the truck, holding on firmly and leaning in the opposite direction of the overturn.
- Exit from a stand-up type forklift with rear-entry access by stepping backward if a lateral tip over occurs.
- Use extreme caution on grades or ramps.
- On grades, tilt the load back and raise it only as far as needed to clear the road surface.
- Do not raise or lower the forks while the forklift is moving.
- Do not handle loads that are heavier than the weight capacity of the forklift.
- Under all travel conditions, the truck shall be operated at a speed that will permit it to be brought safely to a stop.
- Slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles and other locations where vision is obstructed.
- Look toward the travel path and keep a clear view of it.
- Do not allow passengers to ride on forklift trucks.
- When dismounting from a forklift, set the parking brake, lower the forks or lifting carriage, and neutralize the controls.
- Do not drive up to anyone standing in front of a bench or other fixed object.
- Do not use a forklift to elevate workers who are standing on the forks.
- On all grades, the load and load engaging means shall be tilted back, if applicable, and raised only as far as needed to clear the road surface. The forks shall not be raised or lowered while the forklift is moving.
- Brakes, steering mechanisms, control mechanisms, warning devices, lights, governors, lift overload devices, guard and safety devices, lift and tilt mechanisms, articulating axle stops, and frame members shall be carefully and regularly inspected and maintained in a safe condition.
- When work is being performed from an elevated platform, a restraining means such as rails, chains, etc., shall be in place, or a body belt with lanyard or deceleration device shall be worn by the person(s) on the platform.



- An operator should avoid turning, if possible, and should use extreme caution on grades, ramps, or inclines. Normally the operator should travel straight up and down.

In addition to the above follow operator's manuals, which are supplied by the equipment manufacturer and describe the safe operation and maintenance of forklifts.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - The information and suggestions presented by Michigan Millers Mutual Insurance Company in this Safety Talks Toolkit Bulletin are for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related, or other, laws or regulations. You are encouraged to alter them to fit the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.