

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

SAFETY ALERT

Safe forklift operation

A worker was fatally injured in a recent forklift incident in Queensland. The purpose of this safety alert is to remind employers and forklift operators of the need to operate forklifts in a safe manner.



Employers

- Only allow workers to operate a forklift if they hold a high risk work licence to do so. Issue the forklift key to an authorised person only.
- Ensure forklift operators are adequately supervised – particularly in the case of trainee forklift operators.
- Ensure training is provided for operators on the specific make and model of forklift. This training can be in the form of a checklist with a skilled operator carrying out the training. The training should include operating the forklift and familiarisation of the work area.

- Ensure forklifts are maintained and serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and all safety features provided by the manufacturer are kept on the unit.
- Ensure safety inspections are carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Provide adequate lighting for safe forklift operation.
- Ensure operators and other workers are aware of forklift operating areas. Workplaces should clearly delineate and use exclusion zones such as painted walkways.
- Paint obstacles with high visibility paint.

Forklift operators

- Only drive a forklift when you hold a high risk work licence or are otherwise authorised to perform the high risk work.
- Make sure you read and understand the operating instructions before you operate the forklift.
- Comply with the operating instructions.
- Use the forklift truck only for the purpose for which it was designed.
- Carry out a daily safety inspection of the forklift before you operate the forklift.
- Remain seated while the forklift is moving and do not lean outside of the unit.
- Operate the forklift truck with the load placed fully against the truck carriage or back rest. The mast should be tilted sufficiently backward to safeguard the load.
- Slow down when travelling close to obstacles, other vehicles, or pedestrians.

- When driving, give way to pedestrians. Maintain a clear view ahead and behind (using a correctly adjusted rear view mirror) and give clear indication of your intentions. Maintain a safe distance from other vehicles.
- Drive carefully on wet or slippery surfaces.
- Reduce speed when making a turn.
- Drive in reverse if vision is obscured by a bulky load.
- Slow down on sloping or uneven ground.
- Remove the ignition/starter switch key when you leave the forklift truck. Ensure the controls are in neutral, the power is shut off, the park brakes are applied and the forks fully lowered.
- Wear high visibility clothing.
- Do not carry passengers.

Seatbelts

Seatbelts are provided on most forklifts and should be worn. Seatbelts help to:

1. Stop the operator being thrown out of the seat if the forklift is involved in a collision.
2. Keep the operator's body within the confines of the overhead guard.
3. Prevent the operator being thrown out of the forklift and crushed if the forklift becomes unstable.

Where a forklift is not fitted with a seatbelt the forklift owner should consider retro fitting a seatbelt. The seatbelt should be fitted in accordance with the forklift manufacturer's instructions.

Training and licence requirements

NOHSC 7019 (1992) - Operation of Load shifting and Other Specified Equipment provides guidelines which cover the minimum competencies required for safe use and operation of the specified industrial equipment.

All users, trainees and operators of industrial equipment covered by this national standard are required to:

- hold a relevant certificate of competency unless they are undergoing supervised and/or accredited training; and
- have the necessary health and fitness required to safely operate the relevant type of industrial equipment.

In summary:

- A training plan must be established for the trainee.
- Formal training, covering all the elements of the unit of competency, including both theory and practical, must be provided by an approved person.
- The trainee's informal learning is logged in the log book.
- The trainee undertakes the theory assessment if not completed prior to the log book.
- The trainee undertakes the practical assessment.
- If competent, the trainee makes application for a licence.

More information

Further information is on forklift safety is available at www.worksafe.qld.gov.au or by calling the WHS Infoline on 1300 369 915.

In particular:

- [Plant Code of Practice 2005](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008](#) (s. 18, 25, 31-33)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995](#)
- *NOHSC 7019 (1992) - Operation of Load shifting and Other Specified Equipment.*

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