Forklift Mounted Platform Safety & Compliance Game Plan



Do you have the right safety equipment to use forklift mounted platforms'

Forklifts, lift trucks and other powered mobile equipment (which we'll refer to as 'forklifts') are typically designed to lift materials rather than personnel. But sometimes the best way to get workers to perform a job that needs to be carried out at an elevated location is to have them stand on a platform and use the forklift to lift the platform to the overhead location. OHS laws allow for this, provided that the right equipment is used and appropriate safeguards are followed. Unfortunately, things don't always go according to plan.

Example: A Saskatchewan company was fined $24,000 for an incident in which a worker suffered serious injuries while working on a platform attached to a forklift. The company pled guilty to 2 OHS violations, including failure to ensure that: i. no worker works, no material is piled, stored or handled, no scaffold is erected or dismantled and no equipment or powered mobile equipment is used or operated within the specified minimum clearance distance specified in the OHS Regulations; and ii. work is sufficiently and competently supervised [*101063698 Saskatchewan Ltd.,* Government News Release, November 16, 2020].

Here's a look at OHS forklift mounted platform requirements

and the 6 things you must do to comply with them .

Step 1. Ensure that Forklift & Platform Are Properly Designed

Forklift mounted platform operations aren’t something you can freelance. The common risk is that workers will hop onto a plain old wooden skid used to lift materials and ask a nearby forklift driver for a ‘lift.’ You must use specially designed equipment in which a cage or other platform is either built into the forklift or comes in a separate piece that the forklift is specifically designed to fit or support.

While specifics vary slightly by province, OHS regulations require that forklift-mounted platforms:

- Be commercially manufactured or constructed in accordance with specifications certified by a professional engineer;
- Be designed by the manufacturer or a professional engineer to safely support the expected load;
- Be equipped with guardrails and toe-boards that meet applicable OHS fall protection requirements;
- Be equipped with a screen or similar barrier along the edge of the platform adjacent to the mast of the forklift to prevent workers from coming into contact with the mast drive mechanism;
- Have a skid-resistant deck; and
- Be securely attached to the forks and carriage of the forklift.

A few provinces require forklift mounted platforms to meet specific nongovernment standards:

Jurisdiction(s)	**Required Standard for Forklift Mounted Platforms**

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Federal	Not specified
Alberta	Not specified
British Columbia	ANSI/ITSDF B56.1-2009, Safety Standard for Low Lift and High Lift Trucks, if the platform is being used with a high lift truck; or ANSI/ITSDF B56.6-2011, Safety Standard for Rough Terrain Forklift Trucks, if the platform is being used with a rough terrain forklift truck
Manitoba	Not specified
New Brunswick	Not specified
Newfoundland	Not specified
Nova Scotia	Latest version of latest version of ANSI standard ANSI/ITSDF B56.1, Safety Standard for Low Lift and High Lift Trucks
Ontario	Not specified
Prince Edward Island	CSA Standard B335-15 Safety standard for lift trucks
Qu□bec	CSA Standard B335.1-1977 Low Lift and High Lift Trucks
Saskatchewan	Not specified
Northwest Territories/Nunavut	Not specified
Yukon	Not specified

Step 2: Ensure Forklift Mounted Platforms Are Properly Marked

Many jurisdictions require that specific safety information be legibly and permanently marked in a conspicuous place on an elevated work platform. Such information should include:

- The maximum number of workers who may occupy the platform;
- The weight of the platform and its rated load;
- The forklift type for which it's been designed; and
- Any other information necessary for its safe operation;
- If the platform was built by a manufacturer, the model number, serial number or other unique marking or identification linking the platform with the manufacturer's documentation respecting the platform's design and use;
- If the platform was custom built, the unique identification number or linking the platform with the manufacturer's documentation for the platform's design and use;
- The title of the safety standards the platform was designed to meet;
- The weight of the platform when empty;
- The rated load of the platform; and
- The minimum width and minimum rated capacity a forklift must have to support the platform when the platform is loaded to its rated load.

Step 3: Implement Safe Work Procedures for Use of Forklift Mounted Platform

Because of their hazards, forklift mounted platforms should be used only when ladders, scaffolds, other elevating work

platforms and safer alternatives and equipment aren't available. You also need to implement safety policies and safe work procedures for carrying out operations on platforms that protect workers from risk of:

- Falls from the platform due to sudden or unexpected movement of the forklift, operation of the forklift from unlevel or unstable ground, tipping of the forklift, a slippery platform surface, and/or a loose connection between the forklift and platform;
- Contact with electrical powerlines;
- Contact with unguarded moving parts of the forklift;
- Contact with storage racks, scaffolding, roof structures and overhead obstructions; and
- Windy or wet conditions.

Step 4: Ensure Workers on Platform Have Appropriate Fall Protection

Perhaps the biggest hazard of forklift platform use is the risk of falls from the platform. Accordingly, platforms should be equipped with guard rails or other barriers to prevent falls. If such barriers aren't reasonably practicable, workers on platforms should use a fall arrest or other fall protection equipment required by OHS regulations for working at that particular elevation and under those particular conditions. In addition, the platform should have a slip-resistant surface and the forklift should be operated only on level surfaces to avoid risk of tipping.

Step 5: Implement Safe Work Procedures for Forklift Operators

Consider not just the personnel on the platform but also the workers operating the forklift that's supporting the platform. Ensure that those workers:

- Have the necessary training and certification to operate a forklift under the OHS regulations of your province;
- Remain at the controls at all times when the platform is being lifted;

- Operate the forklift only on a flat, level surface;
- Verify that the platform is securely attached to the forks or mast in accordance with manufacturer's instructions before workers mount it;
- Keep the platform horizontal and centered and not tilt it forward or back while it's elevated;
- Ensure that the combined weight of the platform, load and personnel equals one-half of the capacity as indicated on the forklift nameplate of the lift truck, or one-third of the capacity as indicated on the rough terrain forklift's nameplate;
- Do a test or trial lift before raising personnel in the work platform to ensure the work platform reaches the area where the task is to be done, the mast is vertical or the boom travels vertically and there's adequate clearance between work platform and forklift, and any surrounding items;
- Place all travel controls in neutral and set the parking brake;
- Ensure that personnel working on the platform follow all fall protection requirements; and
- Keep hands and feet clear of controls other than those in use.

Step 6. Ensure Proper Platform and Forklift Inspection

Ensure that a qualified person inspects both the work platform and the forklift supporting it each time the platform is mounted on the forklift, and at the start of each work shift, if the platform is already mounted on the forklift at the

start of the work shift, to ensure the platform is properly secured to the forklift and both are safe for use. Such inspections must take place before any worker uses either the work platform or forklift.

