

Forklift Operators' Safety Quiz



Powered mobile equipment like forklifts are involved in roughly 10% of workplace fatalities and 5% of serious workplace injuries in Canada each year. That's about one fatality and about 400 serious injuries per year. Workers' compensation boards estimate that forklift incidents cost Canadian employers over \$125 million in direct compensation costs annually.

Why do forklift incidents happen so often? While equipment failure is part of the problem, investigations show that an estimated 60% to 70% of forklift incidents are due to operator error made in everyday situations like approaching blind intersections or traveling with unstable or vision obstructing loads.

How This Quiz Helps Prevent Forklift Incidents

Bottom Line: It's crucial to determine if your own workers are likely to make these errors. Use this Quiz, which focuses on those real-world moments where operator judgment spells the difference between safe operation and serious incident, to identify which forklift operators need extra safety training. Each Quiz question addresses a common factor identified in forklift accident investigations,

including:

- Tip-over risks caused by speed, turning, or unstable loads
- Visibility hazards when loads block the operator's view
- Pedestrian safety failures in shared work areas
- Improper load handling and stacking practices
- Failure to conduct inspections or follow safe parking procedures.

The goal of this Quiz is not just to test knowledge but reinforce safe decision-making habits that forklift operators must apply on the job each day. After all, even experienced operators benefit from reviewing these safety basics.

Quiz Questions

1. When approaching a blind corner in a warehouse, the safest action is to:

- A. Maintain speed but stay close to the inside wall
- B. Slow down and sound the horn
- C. Stop completely and wait for someone to signal
- D. Turn quickly to clear the corner faster

Correct Answer: B

Takeaway: Forklifts often operate in areas with limited visibility and pedestrian traffic. Sounding the horn at blind corners alerts pedestrians and other operators. Speed control is critical because forklifts require longer stopping distances than many operators realize.

2. What should a forklift operator do if they notice that the load blocks their forward view?

- A. Raise the load slightly to see underneath
- B. Drive forward slowly while leaning out
- C. Travel in reverse while looking in the direction of

travel

D. Ask a coworker to walk beside the forklift

Correct Answer: C

Takeaway: Loads that block forward visibility significantly increase the risk of collisions with pedestrians, racking, or other vehicles. Traveling in reverse allows the operator to maintain clear sightlines and maintain control of the forklift.

3. When traveling with a load, forks should generally be:

A. Level with the ground

B. Raised to waist height

C. Slightly tilted back and kept low to the floor

D. Tilted forward to stabilize the load

Correct Answer: C

Takeaway: Keeping the load low and tilted back stabilizes it and keeps the forklift's center of gravity inside the stability triangle. Raised loads, by contrast, significantly increase tip-over risk.

4. Which of the following is the most common cause of forklift tip-overs?

A. Driving too slowly

B. Turning too quickly

C. Using the horn too often

D. Keeping the forks too low

Correct Answer: B

Takeaway: Forklifts have a high center of gravity and narrow wheelbase, making them prone to lateral tip-overs during sharp turns. Excessive speed while turning is a leading cause of forklift accidents.

5. What should the operator do to protect their own safety if the forklift begins to tip over?

- A. Jump away from the forklift
- B. Lean away from the fall
- C. Stay in the seat, brace feet, and hold the steering wheel
- D. Try to counterbalance by leaning outside the cab

Correct Answer: C

Takeaway: Operators who try to jump from a tipping forklift are often crushed by the overhead guard. The safest action is to remain seated, brace, and lean away from the direction of the tip.

6. Before lifting a load, the operator should FIRST:

- A. Ensure the load is within the forklift's rated capacity
- B. Rev the engine to maximum speed
- C. Raise the forks to pallet height
- D. Tilt the mast forward

Correct Answer: A

Takeaway: Every forklift has a rated load capacity shown on the data plate. Exceeding it or handling improperly balanced loads can shift the center of gravity and cause a forward tip-over or dropped load.

7. Which of the following must the operator do when parking a forklift?

- A. Leave forks raised for visibility
- B. Lower forks to the floor, neutralize controls, and set the brake
- C. Turn the wheels outward
- D. Keep the engine running briefly

Correct Answer: B

Takeaway: Proper parking prevents unintended movement, tripping hazards, and impalement injuries. Lowering forks and applying brakes are basic safety requirements in most forklift operating standards.

8. What should the operator do when a pedestrian walks into a forklift operating area?

- A. Continue slowly so the pedestrian learns awareness
- B. Stop and allow the pedestrian to pass
- C. Honk repeatedly while continuing forward
- D. Drive around the pedestrian quickly

Correct Answer: B

Takeaway: Pedestrian interaction is among the highest-risk forklift scenarios. Operators must always yield to pedestrians and ensure they've cleared the area before proceeding.

9. Which surface condition presents the greatest stability risk to forklifts?

- A. Smooth concrete
- B. Slightly dusty floors
- C. Wet or oily surfaces
- D. Painted floors

Correct Answer: C

Takeaway: Wet or oily surfaces reduce traction, which increases risk of sliding, skidding, and loss of steering control, especially when carrying loads or turning.

10. When carrying a load on a ramp, the load should:

- A. Always face uphill
- B. Always face downhill
- C. Be tilted forward
- D. Be raised higher than normal

Correct Answer: A

Takeaway: When traveling on ramps, the load should remain uphill to prevent it from sliding off the forks or shifting the forklift's center of gravity forward.

- Loaded forklift → drive forward uphill
- Loaded forklift descending → travel in reverse

11. A forklift's load capacity rating is based on:

- A. Ideal conditions and a centered load
- B. Any type of load
- C. The operator's experience level
- D. Maximum engine power

Correct Answer: A

Takeaway: Forklift capacity ratings assume the load is stable, centered, and properly balanced. Off-center loads reduce actual safe capacity.

12. If a load appears unstable after lifting, the safest response is to:

- A. Move quickly to the destination
- B. Raise the load higher
- C. Lower the load and reposition it
- D. Tilt the mast forward

Correct Answer: C

Takeaway: Attempting to move an unstable load increases the risk of falling materials or loss of forklift stability. The safest practice is to stop and correct the load before traveling.

13. Forklifts should never be used to:

- A. Move pallets
- B. Lift workers on an approved work platform

- C. Carry passengers on the forks or body of the forklift
- D. Move loads short distances

Correct Answer: C

Takeaway: Forklifts are designed for one operator only. Passengers can easily fall, be struck by structures, or become caught between equipment.

14. A daily pre-operation inspection should include checking:

- A. Fuel or battery condition
- B. Tires and forks
- C. Warning devices and brakes
- D. All of the above

Correct Answer: D

Takeaway: Doing an inspection before operating the forklift each day is crucial to identify faulty brakes, worn tires, malfunctioning warning devices, and other mechanical defects that may significantly increase accident risk.

15. When stacking loads at height, the operator should:

- A. Approach slowly and squarely to the rack
- B. Raise the load while turning
- C. Drive closer after raising the forks
- D. Tilt the mast forward during travel

Correct Answer: A

Takeaway: Approaching squarely helps ensure load stability and accurate placement. Turning while raising forks or maneuvering close to racks increases the risk of dropped loads or structural damage.

Quiz Score Rating & Follow Up

When reviewing Quiz results, use the following rating

system:

- **13–15 correct:** Excellent – Safe operating awareness
- **10–12 correct:** Acceptable but review procedures
- **Below 10:** Refresher training recommended

Best Practice: After reviewing answers, ask operators:

- Which of the Quiz situations have you seen on the job?
- Which mistake is most likely to happen in this facility?
- What controls do we have in place to prevent it?

This discussion reinforces situational awareness and shared responsibility for forklift safety.