

Forklifts Quiz



QUESTION

What are the OSHA requirements to operate a forklift?

ANSWER

OSHA will provide certification, unless one of the following requirements is missing:

- You've been observed operating the forklift in an unsafe manner.
- You've been involved in an accident or near-miss accident.
- You have received an evaluation that reveals you were not operating the forklift safely.
- You are assigned to drive a different forklift than you were originally trained on.
- A workplace condition changes that could affect safe operation of the forklift.

WHY IS IT RIGHT

FORKLIFT HAZARDS

Safety & Health Administration estimates that forklifts account for 61,800 minor injuries, 34,900 serious injuries, and 85 forklift related deaths every year.

- They can weigh up to 9,000 lbs. (three times heavier than many cars)
- They load and unload heavy weights from high places

- They only have brakes in the front, making them harder to stop
- Uneven weight distribution can make them hard to handle
- Rear-wheel drive increases the chance of tipovers
- Full loads on the forks can obstruct the driver's view

One of the biggest safety risks is using untrained forklift workers. OSHA believes that better training could reduce forklift accidents by about 70%.

GENERAL RULES OF FORKLIFT SAFETY

▪ Load and unload safely

When preparing to enter a pallet, keep the forks high enough and as wide apart as possible.

To capture a load, lift and tilt it back so it's secure. Never exceed your forklift's weight limits.

For minimum clearance, forks should clear the road by six to eight inches (15 to 20 centimeters) and be positioned higher for negotiating ramps and grades.

▪ Plan your route for safety

Turn slowly into position. Raise the forks if necessary.

To stack on a rack, raise the load to the right height and position, tilt the load forward and lower the pallet onto the rack. Withdraw the forks slowly. Back out, looking over your shoulder.

To stack materials on a truck, make sure the dock plate and truck can't move. Position the load, tilt it forward and release.

▪ Everyone in an area near forklift traffic should:

- Never assume the forklift driver sees you.
- Understand that the forklift usually swings out at the

rear end when turning.

- Keep clear of all the parts of a forklift.
- Never drive a forklift unless qualified to do so.

PREVENTION

- Observe the following essential points in the operation of forklifts
- Keep the load low'While moving, forks should be positioned low, with the mast tilted slightly back.
- Maintain good visibility'If a load blocks forward vision, drive backwards.
- Back down slopes that have an incline greater than 10 percent. Make sure your backup alarm works properly.
- Never carry hitchhikers.
- Leave aisle room for others. Honk your horn before and while you enter an intersection.
- While parking on a hill, block the wheels, lower the forks and set the parking brake.
- You must be both authorized and qualified before operating a forklift. Many accidents occur when untrained personnel attempt to drive a forklift. These machines operate differently from an automobile and require special training.
- Inspect the vehicle before operating it. The controls, brakes, tires, lights, horn and other parts must be functioning correctly. Follow the manufacturer's checklist for these daily inspections. Make minor adjustments if you are qualified, but leave major ones to trained and authorized mechanics.
- Check the load capacity of the forklift. Know the load capacity of any floors, elevators, ramps or trailers which you will be driving onto.
- Drive within the speed limit. Driving too fast can prevent you from stopping quickly enough, and can make the handling of the vehicle unstable.
- Stop as required at intersections. Sound the horn before

proceeding around blind corners.

- If you can't see around a load, drive backwards.
- Most forklifts are designed as one-person vehicles. Do not pick up passengers. They are often the victims of serious accidents when they fall off forklifts or are crushed by loads.
- Never allow anyone to walk under the raised forks, and never leave a load suspended in the air without being at the controls.
- Be aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning around gasoline-powered forklifts. Proper maintenance of engines and adequate ventilation of work areas will help prevent carbon monoxide accumulations.
- Follow all precautions for safe refueling of a forklift. Keep in mind gasoline and propane fuels and battery recharging devices can cause fires and explosions.
- When travelling up or down an incline with a loaded forklift, keep the load uphill from you. Travel slowly on ramps.
- Keep your head, hands and feet inside the operator's compartment. Never reach through the uprights.
- Look before you back up.
- Keep the load low. Stop before you raise the load.
- Be aware of maximum height clearances. Loads can be knocked off by overhead obstructions.
- Watch for slippery surfaces, potholes and other hazards. Use the correct forklift for the surface on which you will be travelling. If a forklift is designed for indoor travel on smooth surfaces, it is hazardous to use it on outdoor terrain.

WHY IS EVERYTHING ELSE WRONG

Forklift operations in warehouses across the industrial world are the defining mechanisms which underpin the existence of the warehouse. Significantly, 80% of forklift injuries are caused by human error. Injuries affects forklift operators,

employees interfacing with the forklift operations and pedestrians.

There are the following measures that must be implemented to secure safety.

1. **Keep up on training.** OSHA requires companies to have a safety training program for any forklift operator, but it's in a business' best interest to give training on forklift safety to all employees working in the vicinity of forklifts. It's estimated about 705 of forklift accidents could be prevented by proper training. Making safety a priority takes consistent reinforcement and employee buy-in. Implementing a structured training for all employees on forklift safety is a starting point.
2. **Have a clean, organized warehouse.** A clean, organized warehouse is the foundation of a safe warehouse. Obstruction in lanes not only impedes efficiency, but also forces drivers to make sudden and erratic movements to avoid debris. This could potentially lead to an accident. Clear lanes, free from product, trash, or other obstructions, should be maintained at all times. In addition, look around your warehouse to ensure all areas are well-lit. Visibility, on the side of a forklift driver and pedestrians, is vital for safe operation, so make sure lightbulbs are replaced and all areas have good lighting.
3. **Enhance safety mechanisms.** Design a warehouse that keeps safety in focus by incorporating products that enhance visibility and communication. For example, install blue safety lights on the front and back of forklifts so pedestrians have a clear visual cue of an approaching forklift. Place mirrors at aisle corners to improve visibility. If possible, aisles and lanes should be wide enough to safely accommodate pedestrians and forklifts.
4. **Operate well-maintained forklifts.** Routine safety inspections of a forklift should be done before a driver

begins his shift. A driver should check for leaks (fuel, hydraulic oil, engine oil, radiator coolant), ensure proper tire inflation, and visually inspect fork mechanism, hydraulic hoses, and engine belts. If any issues are found, a qualified mechanic should correct them before the forklift resumes operation.

5. **Maintain loading and unloading procedures.** Heavy or poorly stacked loads, high speeds, or an unmaintained loading dock can contribute to forklift accidents. These conditions can lead to a far too common type of forklift accident: an overturned forklift. Enforce a maximum speed for forklift operation throughout a warehouse and ensure drivers use extreme caution in the loading dock area. Pallets should be uniformly stacked whenever possible and overall weight and stacked height should be taken into consideration when building pallets.