

Spot the Safety Violations: Unsafe Operation of Forklifts & Powered Mobile Equipment



Is This a Safe Way to Operate Powered Mobile Equipment?
There may be at least 7 OHS violations in this photo. How many can you spot?



OHS law mandate that forklifts and other powered mobile equipment (PME) be operated safely so as not to endanger workers and others at the site. Regrettably, the operation shown in this photo is not up to snuff:

1. Using Forklift to Lift Forklift

PME may not be used to lift loads for which it's not intended. Using one forklift to lift another forklift *could be* a violation. But while we don't know whether the PME manufacturer instructions permit such use in this case, we do know that this is one of the first things an OHS inspector would check.

2. Using Forklift to Lift Excessive Load

It's also very possible that the combined weight of the forklift being lifted, its operator and load it's lifting exceeds the rate load of the forklift being used to lift it. Again, this is something that an OHS

inspector would be sure to check.

3. Using Forklift to Lift Unstable Load

Safe operation of PME requires ensuring that loads are stable and secure before they're moved. The forklift being lifted may be secure but the load that the second forklift is carrying clearly is not. And that would render the loads of *both* forklifts unstable.

4. Using Forklift to Lift a Worker

The other problematic part of the load being lifted is the human cargo, namely, the worker operating the second forklift. In most jurisdictions, using a forklift to transport a worker other than the operator is strictly forbidden unless the equipment is designed for such use and the transported worker is securely belted in.

Ban on Workers' Riding on Powered Mobile Equipment

Jurisd.	Rules
Federal	<p><u>Motorized (or manual) materials handling equipment may not be used for:</u></p> <p>* Transporting an employee and no employee shall so use the equipment unless it's specifically designed for that purpose</p> <p>* Hoisting or positioning an employee, unless it's equipped with a platform, bucket or basket designed for those purposes</p> <p>(OHS Regs., Part XIV, Secs. 14.33)</p>
Alberta	A person must not ride on top of a load that is being moved (OHS Code, Part 16, Sec. 276)
BC	Operator of mobile equipment is only worker permitted to ride equipment unless equipment is a worker transportation vehicle meeting requirements of OHS Reg. Part 17 (Transportation of Workers) or other exceptions

Manitoba	<p><u>Employer must ensure that:</u>*No worker is transported by powered mobile equipment or any attachment unless: (a) the equipment or attachment is designed for that purpose; and (b) if there's a separation between the operator and the passenger (s), there's a suitable means of communication between operator and passengers(s)</p> <p>*No worker is transported on top of a load being moved by powered mobile equipment</p> <p><i>(Workplace Safety & Health Regs., Sec. 22.18)</i></p>
New Brunswick	<p>Operator of powered mobile equipment must ensure that a person doesn't ride on any part of equipment not designed to carry passengers (<i>OHS General Reg.</i>, Sec. 228)</p>
Newfoundland	<p>A supervisor may not knowingly operate, or permit a worker to operate, mobile equipment which is, or could create, an undue hazard to person's health or safety, or is in violation of OHS regulations (<i>OHS Regs.</i>, Part XII, Sec. 254)</p>
Nova Scotia	<p>Unless otherwise authorized by legislation, no person may operate a lift truck or powered mobile equipment with passengers on the truck or equipment unless manufacturer's specifications state that it's designed to accommodate them safely (<i>Occup. Safety General Regs.</i>, Sec. 67(1))</p>
Ontario	<p>Mobile equipment may be used to transport a person, other than the operator, only when that worker is seated in a permanently installed seat (<i>OHS Ind. Ests. Regs.</i>, Sec. 54(1)(c))</p>
Prince Edward Island	<p>Operators of powered mobile equipment must ensure that passengers don't ride on any part of the equipment not designed to carry passengers (<i>OHS General Regs.</i>, Part 33, Sec. 33.16(a))</p>
Québec	<p>*No persons other than driver may be on self-propelled vehicle if it's not equipped with a seat and belt to accommodate each person*No worker may remain on load of a self-propelled vehicle in motion</p> <p><i>(OHS Reg., Secs. 282-283)</i></p>

Saskatchewan	<p><u>Employer or contractor must ensure that:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *No worker is transported on a vehicle or unit of powered mobile equipment unless the worker is seated and secured by a seat-belt or other restraining device designed to prevent the worker from being thrown from vehicle or equipment while it's in motion *No worker is transported on the top of a load that's being moved by a vehicle or unit of powered mobile equipment * Where an open vehicle or unit of powered mobile equipment is used to transport a worker, that the worker is restrained from falling from vehicle or powered mobile equipment and that no part of worker's body protrudes beyond the side <p>(OHS Regs., Part XI, Sec. 165)</p>
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5. Using Forklift Near Overhead Power Lines

The top of the elevated forklift and its metallic load are perilously close to overhead power lines. And while we don't know for sure, it's a pretty good bet that those power lines haven't been de-energized.

6. No Protection against Falling Objects

At least 2 of the 3gentlemen standing below the elevated forklift are in the danger zone if the load were to fall—and only one of them is wearing a hard hat.

7. Parked Forklift Not Secured against Moving

The first forklift is parked on a slight incline but there are no wheel chocks in place to keep it from moving.

Multiply OHS Violations by 4

If OHS laws are being violated, the unsafe forklift operation pictured in the photo, at least 4 different persons could be held liable:

- The employer;
- Both of the individual forklift operators; and
- The supervisor in charge of the operation.

Bottom Line: The 7 potential OHS violations we've flagged could actually result in 28 charges.

For More on Ensuring Safe Operation of PME

[Click here](#) for a Model Powered Mobile Equipment Policy that you can adapt to prevent these and other PME operation violations.