

## **Forklift Trucks - Common Factors in Forklift Accidents**

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### **What factors contribute to forklift trucks accidents?**

Many work-related factors can cause accidents. Grouping them into specific categories may help to analyze accidents and, eventually, to prevent them.

#### **What factors of work organization can contribute to forklift trucks accidents?**

- Lack of training or improper training of workers who have to operate forklift trucks.
- Production factors such as speed or stress.
- Lack of proper tools, attachments and accessories.
- Improper assignment of forklifts and operators.
- Poor maintenance of forklifts.
- Age of forklifts.

#### **What behavioral and operational factors can contribute to forklift trucks accidents?**

- Travelling at excessive speed.
- Riding with the load elevated.
- Improper backing up techniques.
- Improper turning, braking or accelerating.
- Improper warnings to others about a forklift in use nearby.
- Poor communication during shared tasks, or in shared spaces.
- Riding or giving rides on forklift or load.
- Parking the forklift improperly.
- Improper blocking of wheels on semi-trailers or railway cars.
- Horseplay; stunt driving; jerky, erratic driving.
- Inadequate servicing of the forklift.

#### **How can workplace design contribute to forklift trucks accidents?**

- Narrow aisles.
- Crowded, cluttered aisles.
- Obstructions at intersections and doors.
- Volume of traffic in work area.
- Walking and working in the general area of forklift operations.
- Other workplace conditions such as noise, smells, toxic gases, dust, or poor lighting.
- Many ramps with different surfaces.
- Condition of loading dock.

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### **What characteristics of the load create a hazard?**

- Poorly stacked or piled on the pallet.
- Pallets in poor repair.
- Load too heavy.
- Load unstable or blocking vision.

### **What mechanical conditions or design features increase the risk for forklift accidents?**

- Malfunction of brakes.
- Malfunction of steering.
- Malfunction of clutch, shift linkage, or transmission.
- Malfunction of mast assembly.
- Leaks in hydraulic systems or transmission.
- Safety devices lacking, inadequate, or malfunctioning.
- Emissions from forklifts.
- Blind spots or obstructions blocking driver's view.
- Poor layout of controls and displays.

### **How can accidents with pedestrians be reduced or avoided?**

- Separate the pedestrian and forklift traffic by creating designated walkways or travel ways.
- Restrict people from entering areas where the forklift is operating.
- Keep a safe distance from the forklift whenever possible.
- Pedestrians should always let the driver know they are in the area. Make eye contact with the driver to ensure your presence is known.
- Ensure the area is well lit and there are no obstructions.
- Be cautious near blind corners, doorways, and narrow aisles. Sound the forklift horn at intersections.
- Use high-visibility clothing, where appropriate.
- Limit forklift travel speed.
- Do not walk near or under raised forks.
- Do not load the forklift in a way that restricts the driver's viewing area.
- Avoid driving forklift near areas where pedestrian traffic is high (e.g., lunch rooms, time clocks, entrances/exits).