

SAFETY RULES FOR OPERATION OF FORKLIFT TRUCKS

Anyone using the forklift trucks must be certified in their operation through the Facilities Management training program. Non-certified personnel are not to operate this equipment under any circumstances.

The National Safety Council "Forklift Truck Operators Training Course" is to be used as the primary source of reference for use of forklift trucks.

These procedures have been prepared to provide a basic source of reference and a means of uniformity for use of forklift trucks. When a question arises that cannot be suitably answered by reference to these operating procedures, it is suggested the Operator's manual be consulted or the matter be discussed with the supervisor.

PHYSICAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR OPERATORS

- ◆ No physical or mental condition that would jeopardize the safe operation of the truck (dizzy spells, medication, bad back, etc.)
- ◆ Good vision, of at least 20/40, corrected if necessary; depth perception of at least 90 percent of normal. Wearing vision protection is recommended at all times.
- ◆ Normal hearing, preferably without need of a hearing aid.
- ◆ Normal reflexes and reaction time.
- ◆ No use of illegal substances; no excessive use of alcohol.
- ◆ Ability to understand and read instructions, signs, etc.

PRE-SHIFT INSPECTION

A pre-shift inspection of the forklift truck is required before the equipment is used. The following items must be checked before operating the equipment:

- ◆ Fuel level and gauge.
- ◆ Oil level.
- ◆ Hydraulic oil level.
- ◆ Powershift oil level.
- ◆ Battery water level.
- ◆ Visual inspection of battery for corrosion and loose terminals.
- ◆ Coolant water level.
- ◆ Visual inspection of the fan belt.
- ◆ Brakes for proper operation – both service and parking.
- ◆ Lights – head, tail, turn, and warning.
- ◆ Horn.
- ◆ Hoist mechanism: chain bearings, nuts, and cotters. Lube as required. Also check the forks for cracks, heel wear, tip wear, and alignment.
- ◆ Steering.
- ◆ Hydraulic controls.
- ◆ Tires: remove foreign material and check inflation.
- ◆ Visual inspection for oil, fuel, and exhaust leaks.

At the end of the usage, all the above items must be checked again. In addition, the operator must place all controls in neutral and set the parking brake. During the winter, the engine heater must be plugged in if the unit is so equipped.

The “Operators Daily Report” must be filled out during both the pre-use and post-use inspections and turned in to Transportation Services, along with the keys to the equipment, at the end of use.

LIFT TRUCK OPERATION

Only certified personnel may operate the forklift trucks. You must show both your driver license and a valid Facilities Management Certified Operator’s card at Transportation Services to get the keys to the equipment. No certified operator may check the equipment out and then turn it over to a non-certified operator. This action will result in revocation of certification and possible disciplinary action.

- ♦ **Leaving the truck:** Whenever the operator leaves the truck, the forks or attachment must be fully lowered, the controls set in neutral, and the parking brake set. If the operator goes 25 feet or more away from the truck, or is out of sight of the truck, the engine must be shut off, and the operator must have the key in his or her possession.
- ♦ **Visibility:** The operator must always have a clear view of the path in the direction of travel. If the load being carried blocks forward view, the driver must travel with the load trailing.
- ♦ **Load handling:** Only stable and safely arranged loads within the rated capacity of the truck should be handled. Operators are not to pick up and move loads that are too heavy. If, upon attempting to lift the load, the rear wheels of the truck begin to rise, set the load down immediately and obtain proper equipment to lift a load of that size.

When picking up a load, center the load evenly on the forks, and engage loads squarely until the load rests against the vertical portion of the forks or load backrest. Check the fork length. Forks must be at least 2/3 the length of the load. Carefully tilt the mast backward just enough to stabilize the load. Forks on a lift truck are adjustable; spread them to fit the load. Normally, the wider the better.

Loads can be of many sizes and descriptions. Many lift truck applications handle loads on pallets. Pallets are loaded with boxes, bags, packages, or other small objects. All loads should be made stable by either interlocking the objects, or strapping or shrink-wrapping the load, to prevent individual objects from falling off the pallet.

Long loads, such as carpet rolls, reduce the stability of a lift truck. Long, wide, or high loads require more room, so watch the clearance. The load may be very secure until something is run into that shifts the truck’s center of gravity. This creates the potential for a lateral overturn. Lifting long loads that extend directly in front changes the weight center of the truck and reduces the lifting capacity of the truck. When right angle stacking or moving with a raised load to clear low objects, move very slowly and avoid sharp turns.

When raising a load, use extra caution. An elevated load must not be tilted forward except when the load is in the correct position to be deposited. When stacking, use only enough backward tilt to stabilize the load.

- ♦ **Operating surfaces:** Operate the forklift trucks only on improved surfaces if possible. If operating off of improved surfaces, make sure the surface will support the weight of the vehicle and not create unstable conditions before entering the area.

On grades, ramps, slopes, and inclines, travel straight up and down. Never turn on ramps, slopes, inclines, or severe grades; wait until you are back on a level surface. Never try to cross a ramp, slope, incline, or severe grade perpendicular to the fall line. This creates the potential for a lateral overturn. Without a load, travel up or down with the forks pointing downgrade.

- ♦ **Pedestrians:** The operator of the forklift truck is responsible for operating in a safe manner; this includes avoiding all pedestrians in the work area. Always face the direction of travel. Pedestrians use the same roadway, so sound the horn at intersections and blind spots.

Watch for people in the work area because they may not watch for the forklift, even if there are warning lights and/or alarms. If it is determined that they may not see the lift truck, do not move until eye contact is made. Make people stand back, even if the lift truck is stopped. Pedestrians may not understand that the lift truck has rear steering and there are visibility restrictions. If the view is blocked because of the load, travel backwards. If the lift truck must move forward, make sure that people are out of the way and move the lift truck slowly. Use a spotter to help you. If the spotter or a clear path of travel is not visible, don't move the lift truck.

Watch for employees working in the same area. Don't let anyone walk under raised forks or load. If given a load to handle and someone is required to hold or position the load while the lift truck is moving – **STOP**. There is something wrong. If unable to handle the load alone, change the load or the equipment. Otherwise, someone will eventually be hurt badly. Don't take this risk. Find a better way to move the load.

- ♦ **Personnel and moving platforms:** The lift truck is never to be moved or repositioned with a platform elevated or with personnel on the platform. Always lower the platform and have all personnel dismount before moving or repositioning the truck. The only way to raise personnel to a work site is with the appropriate platform. Never allow anyone to use the upright or mast of the truck as a ladder.

Before using a platform, always ensure that it is securely stacked to the fork/backrest mechanism and secured with a safety chain before the truck is moved. Make sure that no part of the platform interferes with the operation of the carriage or upright assembly. Also, be certain that there are no mechanical problems which might cause the upright to bind. Raise and lower the platform alone, to test its operation, before allowing any person on it.

When a work platform is raised and lowered, watch for slack chains, or any stationary object, which could cause the forks, rails, or platform to hang up or drop. Keep the upright in a vertical, untilted position while the platform is raised. Stay with the truck during the entire time the platform is raised. Do not allow anyone to climb on the upright or walk under the raised platform. Never allow anyone to ride on the platform while the lift truck is being moved.

LIFT TRUCK TIPOVER

Lift trucks can be tipped over if not operated properly. Observe the following procedures to lessen the possibility of a tipover:

- ♦ Slow down before turning. Go into and out of turns slowly, using a slow rotation of the steering wheel.
- ♦ Drive with the forks or attachments lowered and tilted back only enough to stabilize the load. Raising a load high moves the center of gravity and lowers the capacity. Keep your loads down, with the masts vertical or tilted back only enough to stabilize the load. If a heavy load is tilted too far forward or back while it is raised, the truck can tip over.
- ♦ Check capacities – don't overload the truck.
- ♦ Don't move unstable loads.
- ♦ Move long, high, or wide loads slowly and carefully.

- ♦ Check your overhead clearance. Keep the truck at least 10 feet from any overhead electrical wires. Watch for overhead obstructions like pipes and low doors. If they are hit while moving, a lift truck can tip over.
- ♦ Don't forget that the lift truck has rear steering. A turn into a soft shoulder or off a curb can tip a truck over. Watch the steering end of the lift truck and keep the steering wheels on the road.
- ♦ Turning too sharply with the forks raised can tip over the lift truck, even at slow speeds and with no load. Take the time necessary, slow down, and operate safely.
- ♦ There may be times when the truck is operated empty for long runs at close to its top speed. Slow way down before turning. Lift trucks are rear-end heavy because of the counterweight used to offset loads. An empty lift truck can turn over just like a loaded truck.

Stunt Driving and horseplay:

Stunt driving and horseplay are never permitted. Forklift trucks are very heavy and inherently unstable. Safe driving must be taken seriously. Any person observed driving in an unsafe manner will have their operator certification revoked and disciplinary action may be recommended.