



Forklift Safety and Young Workers

Information for Employers

Forklifts are a very important part of handling and moving materials in many industries. However, they can also be one of the most dangerous pieces of equipment in the workplace. All workers, especially young workers, must be properly trained, supervised, and made aware of the hazards and risks associated with forklifts.

Why Focus on Young Workers?

- Young workers, particularly male young workers, are at a much higher risk of injury than other workers. Injury rate for young male workers is 70 percent higher than overall injury rate for all B.C. workers.
- More than half of workplace accidents involving workers aged 15 to 24 happen during the first six months on a job, with almost 20 percent occurring during the first month.
- Without knowledge and experience, it's difficult for youth to recognize potentially unsafe situations and equipment.
- Eager to please and unwilling to make waves, young workers may be hesitant to question the safety at their workplace or ask for proper safety training.
- Many feel pressured to complete a job quickly and can be swayed by peer pressure, regardless of the risks involved.
- Young workers' sense of invincibility and confidence makes them more willing to accept dangerous tasks.
- Without a thorough understanding of their rights and responsibilities as workers, youth may be reluctant to ask questions or refuse to perform unsafe work.

In 2005, in British Columbia, three young workers were killed in forklift accidents. Many more sustained serious injuries including multiple fractures, serious concussions, and paralysis.

Here are some scenarios that resulted in workplace tragedies.

- ▶ Forklift tipping over crushed worker who was trying to jump out
- ▶ Forklift crushing worker by pushing another object against him
- ▶ Pedestrian struck by turning forklift
- ▶ Worker stuck by falling load
- ▶ Person other than operator fell from the machine while being carried by the forklift

**Forklift accidents are preventable.
Training, supervision, and following safety rules can save lives!**

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Information for Forklift Operators

- Only authorized and trained workers can operate forklifts.
- Forklifts are **NOT** cars; they react differently!
- Sudden turns, careless driving, or turning on slopes can cause a forklift to tip over. **NEVER** try to jump out. If your forklift starts to tilt, take a firm grip of the steering wheel and push yourself back into your seat. Keep your body inside the frame of the machine.
- Always wear a seatbelt if your forklift is equipped with one. **IT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE!**
- Be aware of all pedestrian traffic; ensure that your route is safe before you proceed.
- Never carry passengers on your forklift.
- Make sure that the load is stable and secure.
- Don't let anyone go near or step under a lifted load.
- Watch for overhead obstructions such as electrical wires, lights, piping, etc.
- Park your forklift on a level surface, away from traffic. **ALWAYS** turn the engine off, apply the park brake, and leave the forks tilted forward with the tips touching the floor.

Driver's Daily Safety Checklist

Employers are responsible for ensuring that forklifts used in your workplace are safe and comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. As an operator, you are responsible for inspecting your forklift before the start of your shift, and as required during the shift to ensure it is safe for continued use.

IF YOU DISCOVER ANY DEFICIENCIES, DO NOT OPERATE THE MACHINE AND CONTACT YOUR SUPERVISOR IMMEDIATELY.

Check the manufacturing manual for information on items to include in the operator's start-of-shift inspection. Items commonly included are:

- Fluids** / Check levels of engine and hydraulic oil, battery, fuel, and coolant
- Tires** / Check air pressure (on machines with pneumatic tires), and the overall condition of tires
- Mast assembly** / Inspect rollers, chains, backrest, and cylinders
- Forks** / Check for any sign of damage, such as cracks
- Load-capacity plate** / Check if it is present and legible
- Foot break and park brake** / Ensure both are working properly
- Pedals, controls, and steering** / Inspect for smooth movement, no "slack" (free movement of the steering wheel before the wheels start to turn)
- Seating** / Check condition and adjustment for the seat
- Mirror** / Ensure your machine has functional rear view mirror
- Warning devices** / Check the functionality of the horn, lights, and back-up beeper (if your machine is equipped with one)