

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Safety Tips: Forklift Safety



Forklifts are widely used on most farms, and many employees will be called on to use them in all the day-to-day activities at one time or another. With this fact in mind, it behooves everyone to see that these individuals are trained in their proper and safe use. Improper use of a lift truck can topple the machine. Understanding this fact reinforces the fact that all operators should be trained properly before being allowed to use one.

Heavy loads held high exert increased leverage. This act makes it important to know the load limit of the machine. The size and center of gravity will influence its lifting capacity. The lifted load should never be allowed to balance the weight of the truck.

BASIC SAFETY RULES:

- Always use the seatbelt or operator restraining device. Keep all parts of the body inside the running lines of the lift.
- Look to the front and rear before starting the engine.
- Face in the direction of your travel. Look behind before reversing.
- Check the load plate before loading. You should only carry a load that the machine was designed and rated for.
- Never drive with faulty brakes.
- Avoid sudden stops, starts or turns. Obviously, with any of these actions, it could cause the lift to topple or turnover. Use extra caution when using a forklift on loading docks.
- Drive slowly and with care on wet, slick surfaces or on rough ground.
- Stop or slow down, whichever case may be needed when your vision is blocked or impaired.
- As in all single seat vehicles, use the slogan of "One seat-One rider."
- Do not work under suspended loads: The hydraulics might malfunction.
- Don't drive with the forks raised: Keep them low enough to barely clear the ground and slightly tilted back.
- When climbing a hill or incline or moving downhill, always keep the load uphill, and you should never drive across an incline.
- Do not park on a slope.
- Don't ever leave the forklift unattended without lowering the forks, setting the brakes, neutralizing the controls, shutting off the power and removing the ignition key.
- Always remember that the stability of a forklift truck decreases as a load is raised.
- Try to avoid tilting a load until you get to the place for unloading.

PREQUALIFICATIONS FOR FORK LIFT OPERATORS:

- Should have no adverse vision problems that cannot be corrected with glasses or contact lenses.
- No adverse problems that cannot be corrected with the help of hearing aids.
- No physical limitations that would interfere with the safe operation of a fork lift.
- No neurological problems that would affect your balance or consciousness.
- Not taking any medications that could affect the perception, vision, or physical abilities.

SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES:

- Only authorized and trained personnel should operate forklifts.
- All lifts should be equipped with a headache rack, a fire extinguisher, rotating beacon, backup alarm and seat belts. Seat belts should be worn at all times when operating a lift.
- The operator should perform daily pre and post trip maintenance checks.
- Any safety defects such as hydraulic leaks, defective brakes, steering, lights, brakes, horn, back up alarm, seat belt or backup-alarm should be reported for repairs immediately or asked to put the unit out of service until the repairs are made.
- Operators should follow the proper recharging and refueling safety procedures.
- Hard hats should be worn in high lift or in potentially hazardous areas.
- Operators must remember to sound the horn at turns or intersections and when meeting people.
- If the lift is to be used as a platform, a four-sided cage with guards and toe-boards must be in place.
- Aisles should be free from obstruction and have a minimum of six foot clearance for vehicle operation.

FUELING SAFETY:

- Fuel tanks cannot be filled with the engine running.
- Avoid spills! If it happens (oil or fuel), spills should be abated immediately.
- No lift should be used with a leak in the system or without a fuel cap.
- No Smoking around fueling or refueling lift trucks should be tolerated.

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Excerpts: Farm Service Agency

**~ SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S
RESPONSIBILITY~
- ALERT TODAY -
ALIVE TOMORROW!!**