

FORKLIFTS & TELEHANDLERS

IDENTIFY

Forklifts are a reliable tool that save time and reduce injuries associated with manual labour. However, forklifts can become deemed dangerous if an untrained operator is behind the wheel. Forklift incidents can easily become serious incidents, due to personal injury and damage to property. Incidents like these can be avoided if the operator follows safe practices and procedures.

Before driving a forklift or telehandler, it is critically important that operators receive training to ensure they are thoroughly familiar with methods to prevent tip-overs, or other incidents related to the operation of the equipment.

COMMUNICATE AND CONTROL

Many workers have been injured by lift trucks in situations like the following:

- A worker was struck by a lift truck when it was backing up or when the worker could not be seen by the operator.
- The lift truck tipped over and crushed the operator or nearby worker.
- The load on the forks fell off because it was not loaded or secured properly.
- The operator did not keep their hands inside the cab.
- The operator slipped and fell while entering or exiting the cab.

When operating lift trucks, another major concern is tip-overs. Here are some things to be aware of:

- Never carry a load heavier than the recommended ratings.
- Avoid lifting or lowering a load while the lift truck is on a slope.
- Don't turn too quickly or abruptly.
- Ensure the load is always facing the uphill side of a slope while driving.

While travelling with a load on the forks, it is best practice to keep the forks approximately six inches off the ground. The centre of gravity of the lift truck will move as the load is lifted and lowered.

When operating any forklift or telehandler, the operator must wear a seatbelt at all times. This will help secure the operator into the cab in case of a tip-over or other incident.

All lift trucks must be inspected prior to each use by the individual operator. This inspection should be documented to identify any deficiencies found within the equipment.

Here are some of the things to check for:

- Fuel level or propane level
- Condition of tires
- Warning light works
- Back-up alarm works
- Hoses in good condition with no visible cracks
- The boom or mast will raise and lower properly
- The equipment drives and steers properly
- The operator manual is on the equipment

FACTS AND TIPS

Most injuries and property damage are caused by:

- Lack of safe operating procedures
- Lack of safety rule enforcement
- Insufficient or inadequate training

When not in use, the forks must be left on the ground, never elevated. Operators should never leave an unattended lift truck with an elevated load. Watch for blindspots and other traffic or pedestrians in your area. The company should develop safe work procedures for the safe operation of a lift truck. This will aid in the training of workers, and be a reference when questions arise.

FACTS AND TIPS

All forklifts and telehandlers will have a capacity plate. The operator should know the location of this plate and review it to ensure the equipment is adequate to lift the load(s).

CAPACITY DATA PLATE			
MODEL	5 FGC 20		
SERIAL NO.	5FGCU25 - 72149		
APPROX. WT	8130 LB. (3,687 k)	TYPE	LP
	CAPACITY	LOAD CENTRE	FORK HEIGHT
	3750 LB (1,701 k)	24 IN (61 cm)	185 IN (470 cm)
RATED CAPACITY	3850 LB (1,746 k)	24 IN (61 cm)	169 IN (429 cm)
	4000 LB (1,815 k)	24 IN (61 cm)	151.5 IN (385 cm)
	CAPACITY BASED ON VERTICAL MAST EXCLUDING ATTACHMENT <small>THIS FORK LIFT TRUCK MEETS DESIGN SPECS ASME (ANSI) STANDARD B56.1</small>		

As per the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Regulation Part 25.1, all booms while extended must be a minimum of three metres away from overhead powerlines.

As per the WSH Regulation Part 22.29, forklift operators must be trained and certified for each lift truck they operate. This certification is valid for three years and must be re-certified upon expiration.

It is the employer's responsibility to issue valid certificates of training and maintain the records of training as per the legislated requirements. If the employer has an employee they deem a competent person, they complete in-house training. This is an acceptable form of training. They have the option to send workers to a recognized third party trainer as well.

THE QUIZ

- When the operator leaves a forklift, what steps would they take to park it?
 - Make sure the forks are on the ground
 - The parking-break is set
 - Power is off
 - All of the above
- Forklifts have seatbelts:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- An unstable load will cause the forklift to:
 - Stop working
 - Tip-over
 - Roll backwards
- The capacity plate is only required for forklifts being used in warehouses:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- What are four things to check for on a pre-use check?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- All operators need to be trained every three years:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____

ANSWERS:
1. d; 2. TRUE; 3. b; 4. FALSE; 5. Tires, back-up alarms, warning lights, fuel/propane level, condition of hoses, condition of tires, and/or the boom/mast works properly; 6. TRUE