

Forklift Safety Topic

This section addresses forklift and other Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) requirements and concerns.

General

More than 20,000 injuries occur annually in the United States alone – involving powered industrial trucks (PIT), or forklifts. According to OSHA, most employee injuries as well as property damage are directly related to lack of safe operating procedures, rule enforcement, and insufficient training.

Training

To reduce the number of accidents, employers must institute employee operator training. The following are minimum OSHA program elements:

- Operating instructions, warnings, and precautions
- Differences between the truck and the automobile
- Truck controls and instrumentation
- Engine or motor operation
- Steering and maneuvering
- Visibility (including restrictions due to loading)
- Fork and attachment adaptation, operation, and use limitations
- Vehicle capacity
- Vehicle stability
- Vehicle inspection and maintenance
- Refueling and/or charging and recharging of batteries
- Operating limitations
- Any other operating instructions, warnings, or precautions listed in the operator's manual
- Surface conditions where the vehicle will be operated
- Composition of loads to be carried and load stability
- Load manipulation, stacking, and unstacking
- Pedestrian traffic in areas where the vehicle will be operated

- Narrow aisles and other restricted places where the vehicle will be operated
- Hazardous (classified) locations where the vehicle will be operated
- Ramps and other sloped surfaces that could affect the vehicle's stability
- Closed environments and other areas where insufficient ventilation or poor vehicle maintenance could cause a buildup of carbon monoxide or diesel exhaust
- Unique or potentially hazardous environmental conditions in the workplace that could affect safe