Forklifts Checklist

The forklift indeed is the workhouse or driving force that defines the warehouse. Recent studies show that every year about 80% of forklift related injuries are caused by human error.

“Action” is needed to reduce 80% fork-lift related injuries through human error. Without action, the trickle-down effect of hampered or restricted forklift efficiencies in the warehouse affects us all including the safety of workers who interact with operations of the forklift on a daily basis.

Forklift accidents are a loading source of fatal and serious work injuries. The failure to ensure proper use of forklifts is among the top 10 most frequent causes of OSHA and OHS citations.

Workplan to prevent forklift accidents and fatalities

Ensure Forklifts Meet Design Standards

All new powered industrial trucks you acquire, and use must meet the design and construction requirements outlined in the *American National Standard for Powered Industrial Trucks and the Canadian Standard Association Safety Standard for Lift Trucks*.

Ensure Forklifts Are Used Only in Locations Allowed for Designation

Know the different designations for industrial trucks (in general and specifically for those used at your site). These designations are based on how forklift is powered, e.g., diesel, electrical or gas.

Ensure Forklifts Have Right Safety Guards

A load backrest extension must be used whenever necessary to minimize the possibility of the load or part of it from falling rearward. All loads handled by the forklift and the facility it operates within must meet one of the requirements below:

- All loads do not go higher than the top of the forks.

- All loads are one piece, shrink wrapped, banded or crated.
- No loads in the facility are stacked or racked higher than the operator’s head that does not meet the load requirements above.
- Forklifts with the load backrest removed must be restricted to:
    - Handling only loads meeting the requirements above; or
    - A specific area of the facility that does not contain any loads presenting a hazard

Ensure Forklift Fuel Is Safely Handled & Stored

Your methods of handling and storing liquid fuels such as gasoline or diesel fuel must meet for your forklift such as gasoline and diesel fuel must meet the National or Canadian Fire Safety Association Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code.

Ensure Safe Methods Used to Change & Store Forklift Batteries

There are detailed rules to ensure safe changing, charging and storage of batteries used to power forklifts, including the requirement that you ban smoking in battery charging areas and keep tools and other metal objects away from the top of uncovered batteries.

Ensure Forklift Operating Areas Are Well Lit

Operating areas must be properly illuminated, and auxiliary directional lighting must be provided on the forklift where general lighting is less than 2 lumens per square foot.

Keep Forklift Noxious Gas & Fume Emissions below Required Levels

Concentration levels of carbon monoxide gas and other toxic substances generated by powered industrial truck operations may not exceed regulated levels.

Ensure Forklift Dockboards Meet Safety Standards

Dockboards (or bridge plates that forklifts ride over to get to higher or lower surfaces) must be strong enough to carry the expected load. Portable dockboards must be anchored or have

devices that prevent slipping and have handholds or other effective means to permit safe handling.

Ensure Only Competent Persons Operate Forklifts

Forklifts are only to be operated by those trained to operate a powered industrial truck, as demonstrated by successfully completing the training and evaluation requirements. Forklift training involves instructional training and a skills test. Training should happen:

- Initially and every 3 years after. In some cases, a re-evaluation of skills is required after 18 months.
- When new equipment is introduced into the workplace;
- When the operating conditions and environment have changed;
- When applicable legislation changes; or
- When skill or knowledge deficiencies are identified.

Ensure Forklifts Are Operated Safely

The ANSI and CSA standards lay out detailed requirements to ensure the safe use of forklifts, including how they’re parked, mounted and dismounted.

Ensure Forklifts Are Safely Loaded

Tilting and tipping of loads is a leading cause of forklift accidents.

Ensure Forklifts Are Properly Maintained & Inspected

Forklifts must be inspected at least daily and removed from service if any dangerous defect is found.