New-Worker Zone: Why the First Year on the Job Has Disproportionate Risk Picture This



In the image, two new workers are sitting directly in front of an active forklift, placing their legs and hands inside a deadly crush zone. Their body language shows they are unaware of the extreme danger, treating the equipment like a bench rather than a machine capable of causing fatal injuries. No supervisor appears to be guiding them, and they clearly haven’t been trained on safe forklift boundaries. This behavior highlights how inexperience and lack of orientation put first-year workers at disproportionate risk.

New workers should receive hands-on safety orientation that

clearly explains equipment hazards, exclusion zones, and how to recognize unsafe areas. Supervisors must closely monitor inexperienced employees and intervene the moment unsafe behavior appears. Forklifts must never be approached, sat on, or worked near unless powered down, parked, and secured. Building a strong safety culture early prevents first-year workers from developing risky habits that can lead to serious injuries.