Using a Forklift Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. Forklifts are impressive work equipment, weighing three times more than the average car. These big industrial trucks are heavier in the rear, to counter-balance the substantial loads carried on the front.
2. Forklift accidents are the most common type of heavy equipment accidents in American workplaces.
3. When employers fail to provide proper training to their operators, the likelihood of a forklift accident dramatically increases.
4. Forklifts are steered by their back wheels. When the forklift turns on its rear wheels, its rear engine compartment moves with it. An operator who fails to account for the distance can easily swing the rear of the forklift into standing inventory, a coworker or bystander.
5. Tipping can occur when a forklift is overloaded, when it is driven up or down a steep incline, or when operated recklessly.
6. Most forklifts are equipped with overhead guards, or “masts,” to protect the driver from falling objects. If a forklift begins to tip over and the driver tries to jump off, the masts can trap and crush the driver between the forklift and the floor.
7. The forklift operator must be sure to “chock” the wheels. Chocking means placing a wedge in front of and behind each wheel to stop the wheel from rolling.
8. Improperly maintained forklifts can break down in the middle of operation. Sudden, unanticipated stops can cause inventory to dislodge and fall on coworkers or bystanders.
9. Other accidents include fires started from leaking engine oil, crashes due to worn brakes, and the load dropping when the hydraulics fail.

STATS

- More than 1,000,000 forklifts are in operation throughout the United States
- Forklift accidents cost businesses $135,000,000 every year
- Roughly 70% of all accidents could have been avoided with proper training
- OSHA estimates there are 110,000 forklift accidents every year
- Roughly 20,000 workers are injured every year in forklift-related accidents
- Forklift-related citations are routinely among OSHA’s top 10 violations each year:
- Overturned forklifts are the leading cause of deaths involving forklifts; they account for 22% of all forklift-related fatalities
- Workers on foot struck by forklifts account for 20% of all forklift-related fatalities
- Victims crushed by forklifts account for 16% of all fatalities and falls from forklifts account for 9% of all forklift fatalities