

# TOOLBOX TALK

## EQUIPMENT



## Forklift Safety

A forklift is a powerful tool that allows one person to precisely lift and place large heavy loads with little effort. Using a tool such as a forklift, cart or hand truck instead of lifting and carrying items by hand can reduce the risk of employee back injuries. However, there is great risk of injury or death when a forklift operator has not been trained in the principles that allow a forklift to lift heavy loads, is not familiar with how a particular forklift operates, operates the forklift carelessly, or uses a forklift that is not safe due to malfunctioning parts. Forklifts include electric and propane-powered forklifts as well as motorized pallet jacks. All operators must receive classroom safety training and an evaluation of their driving skills.

### **FORKLIFT INSPECTIONS**

- Forklifts must be inspected for hazards at the beginning of each workday or shift
- Items that should be checked: tire condition, fork and mast control, brake controls, steering controls, warning equipment, and seat belt

### **FORKLIFT OPERATION**

- Operate the forklift with a defensive driving mentality. Operators must maintain control of the vehicle at all times. Pedestrians always have the right of way
- When lifting a load, check to ensure load stability and weight limitations. Insert forks into load as far as possible. Lower load to travel height (4"-6" typically) as soon as possible
- If vision is blocked, drive in reverse or use a spotter
- Maintain stability to reduce the risk of tip-over. Watch for poor surface conditions, travel slow, never raise a load while in motion, avoid sharp turns, and use caution on inclines and loading docks
- When parking, always shift into neutral, lower forks to ground level and set parking brake. If the operator is leaving the forklift unattended, turn off and remove the key
- When traveling on roadways, observe all traffic laws. Each forklift that travels on a roadway must have an orange slow-moving-vehicle triangle

### **STABILITY TRIANGLE**

On a common, sit-down style forklift, the stability triangle is a 3-dimensional triangle that, when looking at the side of the truck, extends from both front and back hubs to the top center of the rollover cage. When the center of gravity (CG) leaves the stability triangle, the forklift becomes unstable. Rollover, skid or load dropped could result.

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## Take Home Point:

*While forklifts can help move and lift heavy loads, there are many dangers associated with rollover and dropped loads. Always be sure to have the proper training and inspections prior to operating a forklift. When in operation, be diligent to your load stability and stability triangle to prevent rollovers.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Safety Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Crew Members:

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