



Forklift Safety - Proper Load Handling

HS00-009C (9-05)

A 5-Minute Safety Training Aid

Safety is the most important factor when lifting or lowering a load with a forklift. Smooth operating is essential for maintaining stability and preventing accidents. Forklifts are top heavy so don't exceed the lift's rated capacity and avoid using counter-weights to balance an over-heavy load - split the load instead. Another load isn't a waste of time, look at it as job security. Let's take a look at the correct way to load, carry and unload.

Loading:

- Secure your safetybelt.
- Make sure the load is within the forklift's rated capacity. The nameplate lists the maximum weight you may carry. Never exceed it!
- Check for a stable and centered load and stack or tie uneven or loose loads.
- Use the proper lift fixture for the type of load - carpet spike, drum grapple, etc.
- Spread the forks as widely as possible for even distribution.
- Drive into the loading position and insert the forks far enough to be sure the pallet is completely on the forks - take care not to damage materials stacked next to the pallet.
- Drive under the load until it slightly touches the carriage. Tilt the forks back to shift the weight of the load back, making it more stable.
- If the load is unbalanced, keep the heavier end closer to you. Tilt the mast back.
- Lift the load and tilt it back a little more before traveling.

Carrying the load:

- Keep the forks 6 to 10 inches above the ground to avoid potential ground hazards.
- Carry the load low and tilted back.
- Remember that forklifts are very top heavy when the load is high and a bump can tip it over.
- Don't carry anything on the overhead guard.
- Travel in reverse if the load blocks your vision.
- Always look in the direction of travel.
- Keep your arms and legs inside the forklift.
- Never reach through the mast to adjust the load.
- Do not raise or lower the load while moving.
- Use a spotter if there is not a clear view

- Exercise caution on wet surfaces
- Travel at an appropriate speed

Unloading:

- Turn the forklift slowly into position.
- If unloading onto a truck, before driving straight in, make sure the rear wheels of the truck are chocked, the brakes are locked, and the dock plate is secure and won't move. Then drive in, position the load, tilt it forward and release it.
- If you are unloading onto a stack, position the fork lift properly before lifting the forks - the forklift is top heavy, remember? You don't want to tip over.
- Check for overhead clearance before raising the load.
- Raise and position the load to the correct height - 2 inches above the stack.
- Move the load slowly into position.
- Allow for 2 to 3 inches of clearance at the sides and back of the load.
- Tilt the load forward and then lower it.
- Level the forks so they are no longer tilted.
- Pull the forks back slowly.
- Sound the alarm and back up slowly, looking over your shoulder.
- Once clear of obstructions, stop the forklift and lower the forks to about 6 to 8 inches off the ground. Now you're ready for the next load.

Remember to practice safety. Don't learn it by accident.



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