

## **Description**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) estimates that there are 998,671 industrial trucks in use and that there are about 1.5 million operators. There have been, on average, 101 fatalities and 94,570 injuries annually due to unsafe powered industrial truck operation. Both OSHA and the Bureau of Labor Statistics have data indicating that the largest cause of fatal or serious forklift accidents is vehicle tipovers. Other common types of accidents include being crushed between the vehicle and a surface, being struck by the vehicle, being struck by falling material, falling from a platform on the forks, and running the vehicle off of a loading dock or other surface. Most accidents are caused by errors, and studies have shown that better training reduces operator errors.

Trainers have to have the knowledge, training, and experience to train operators and evaluate their competence. Operators must have both formal instruction (lecture, discussion, written materials, computer-based training, or videos, etc.) and practical training (demonstrations and exercises). Drivers must successfully complete the training and an evaluation before they are allowed to operate a truck without direct supervision.

This training session provides information on the truck-specific and workplace-specific training topics required by OSHA.

## **Objectives**

After your training program, the trainees should be able to:

- Discuss OSHA's training requirements.
- Outline safe operating rules.
- Describe the differences between a forklift and a car.
- Explain forklift stability.
- Discuss workplace-specific operating conditions and instructions.
- Discuss the precautions to be taken in battery charging and refueling areas.
- Identify the forklift's operating controls.
- Demonstrate safe operation of the forklift's controls.

## **Audience**

Anyone operating a powered industrial truck (tow motor, fork lift, etc.) must be trained and evaluated. This training program applies to all industries (except agricultural operations) where powered industrial trucks are being used. Included are: general industry, construction, shipyards, marine terminals, and longshoring operations.

## **Requirements**

Training requirements are outlined in 29 CFR 1910.178(l). Training and evaluation must occur before the worker operates the vehicle without direct supervision. Refresher training in relevant topics is needed when the vehicle is operated in an unsafe manner, after any accident or near-miss, after an evaluation shows retraining is needed, upon assignment to a different type of truck, and upon changes in the workplace that affect safe truck operation. An evaluation is required at least every three years.

Training must cover the requirements of the regulation and the following truck-related and workplace-related topics.

Truck-related topics include:

- Operating instructions, warnings, and precautions for the types of truck the operator will be authorized to operate.
- Differences between the truck and the automobile.
- Truck controls and instrumentation: where they are located, what they do, and how they work.
- Engine and motor operation.
- Steering and maneuvering.
- Visibility (including restrictions due to loading).
- Fork and attachment adaptation, operation, and use limitations.
- Vehicle capacity.
- Vehicle stability.
- Any vehicle inspection and maintenance that the operator will be required to perform.
- Refueling and/or charging and recharging of batteries.
- Operating limitations.

Any other operating instructions, warnings, or precautions listed in the operator's manual for the types of vehicle that the employee is being trained to operate.

**Workplace-related topics include:**

- Surface conditions where the vehicle will be operated.
- Composition of loads to be carried and load stability.
- Load manipulation, stacking, and unstacking.
- Pedestrian traffic in areas where the vehicle will be operated.
- Narrow aisles and other restricted places where the vehicle will be operated.

- Hazardous (classified) locations where the vehicle will be operated.
- Ramps and other sloped surfaces that could affect the vehicle's stability.
- Closed environments and other areas where insufficient ventilation or poor vehicle maintenance could cause a buildup of carbon monoxide or diesel exhaust.
- Other unique or potentially hazardous environmental conditions in the workplace that could affect safe operation.

The employer must certify that the operator has been trained and evaluated. The certification must include the operator's name, the dates of the training and evaluation, and the name of the trainer/evaluator.

Training received by a new employee's previous employer may not need to be repeated, but some training on the site-specific factors of a new operator's workplace will probably always be necessary.

If any of the required topics are not included in the training program, the employer must be able to demonstrate that they are not applicable to the workplace. For example, if the trucks are not operated on any ramps, drivers do not need to be trained on how driving on slopes affects the forklift's stability. OSHA does not specify any amount of time that must be spent on training.