

FORKLIFT/POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCK SAFETY
Standard Operating Procedures

(For assistance, please contact EHS at (330) 263-3663.

Forklift/Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) operators must be trained, evaluated, and certified before independently operating a PIT.

Scope

The term Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) refers to a motorized, power-driven vehicle used to carry, push, pull, lift, stack, or tier material. This definition includes vehicles that are commonly referred to as high lift trucks, counterbalanced trucks, cantilever trucks, rider trucks, forklift trucks, high lift platform trucks; low lift trucks, low lift platform trucks; motorized hand trucks, pallet trucks; narrow aisle rider trucks; high lift order picker rider trucks; motorized hand/rider trucks; and counterbalanced front/side loader lift trucks.

The term PIT does NOT include compressed air or nonflammable compressed gas operated industrial trucks, vehicles intended primarily for earth moving or over-the-road hauling, farm vehicles, agricultural tractors, and skid loaders equipped with buckets used to move seed/feed/manure/soil/material.

General Safety Precautions

- All newer PITs in operation at UNL should be equipped with a seatbelt. Older equipment should be retrofitted with a seatbelt, if feasible.
- All newly-acquired PITs should meet the design and construction requirements of the relevant American National Standards Institute standard (Part II, ANSI B56.1), and should bear a label or other identifying mark indicating approval by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. Every effort should be made to replace equipment that does not meet ANSI requirements.
- Modifications to PITs are not allowed without express written approval from the manufacturer or authorized representative (maintain file documentation).
- PITs must have the correct designation (D, DS, DY, E, ES, EE, EX, G, GS, LP, or LPS) for the location of operation.

Before Operation

- Only trained personnel with current authorization are allowed to operate PITs. Authorization requires successful completion of initial classroom training, hands-on work-area specific training (practical), and a driving test (evaluation). Recertification must be accomplished at least every three (3) years or sooner if the operator has an accident with a PIT or misuses a PIT, the operator is assigned to drive a different type of PIT, or the condition of the workplace changes significantly.
- Passengers are not permitted on or in the forklift or load.

- Daily, at the start of each shift, a visual inspection must be made to ensure that the horn, lights, brakes, tires, gas supply, hydraulic lines, etc. are in safe working condition. Employees may not operate an unsafe forklift at any time.
- Fill fuel tanks out of doors while the engine is off.
- Operators must wear seatbelts on all such equipped trucks.

Picking Up the Load

- Do not exceed the safe load capacity of a forklift at any time. Do not counterweight a forklift to increase its lifting capacity.
- Forks should always be placed under the load as far as possible. Do not lift a load with one fork.
- No load should be moved unless it is absolutely safe and secure.
- When unloading trucks or trailers, the brakes on the vehicle must be set (locked) and the wheels chocked.
- No person is permitted to stand or walk under elevated forks.

Moving the Load

- The operator's view should not be obstructed by the load. In the event of a high load, the forklift should be driven in reverse.
- Operators must look in the direction of travel.
- The forks should not be operated while the forklift is traveling.
- When the forklift is not carrying a load, the operator must travel with the forks as low as possible (maximum of 4 inches on paved surfaces). When carrying a load, it should be carried as low as possible (consistent with safe operation, 3 to 12 inches above the surface.)
- On a downgrade, the forklift should be driven in reverse, and the forks raised only enough to clear the surface.
- On an upgrade, the forklift must be driven in the forward direction, following the load, and the forks raised only enough to clear the surface.
- Use extra care when handling long lengths of bar stock, pipe, or other materials.
- Avoid sharp or fast end-swings.
- Compressed gas cylinders must be moved only with special pallets designed for this purpose.
- Operators should avoid making jerky starts, quick turns, or sudden stops. The operator is not permitted to use reverse as a brake.
- Forklifts should be driven on the right side of the road or aisle-way.
- Forklifts must be operated at a safe speed with due regard for traffic and conditions.
- Slow down on wet and slippery surfaces and at cross aisles or locations where vision is obstructed.
- Operators entering a building or nearing a blind corner must make their approach at reduced speed, sound the horn, and proceed carefully.
- Standard arm signals will be used at all times.
- Operators must give pedestrians the right-of-way at all times.
- Operators must not drive toward any person who is in front of a fixed object or wall.

- Operators may not overtake and pass another forklift traveling in the same direction, at intersections, blind spots, or hazardous locations.
- Operators must cross railroad tracks diagonally whenever possible.
- Operators should not put their fingers, arms, or legs between the uprights of the mast, or beyond the contour of the forklift.
- Operators must drive with both hands on the steering wheel. Horseplay is prohibited. Do not drive with wet or greasy hands.
- No person is permitted to ride as a passenger on a forklift or on the load being carried.

Parking

- Forklifts must be safely parked when not in use. The controls must be neutralized, power shut off, brakes set, key removed, and the forks secured in a lowest position, flat on the surface, and not obstructing walkways or aisles.
- A forklift may not be left on an incline unless it is safely parked and the wheels blocked.
- Forklifts may not be parked in areas that will block exits, stairways, fire extinguishers or any other emergency equipment.

Lifting People

- A forklift may not be used to elevate a platform or pallet with persons on it, except work platforms especially designed and marked for this purpose.
- Work platforms must have standard guard rails, and must be securely fastened to the forks. Fall protection must be worn if any part of person's body will reach outside the guard rails.

Governing Regulations: 29 CFR 1910.178 www.osha.gov

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