

FORKLIFT SAFETY LESSONS FOR THE SAFE PEDESTRIAN

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation. Featured are:

INTRODUCTION: A brief description of the program and the subject that it addresses.

PROGRAM OUTLINE: Summarizes the program content. If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION: These sections will help you set up the training environment, help you relate the program to site-specific incidents, and provide program objectives for focusing your presentation.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Questions may be copied and given to participants to document how well they understood the information that was presented. Answers to the review questions are provided separately.

INTRODUCTION

Forklifts can be very dangerous for both operators and employees out on the floor. In fact, 20 percent of all forklift incidents involve pedestrians being struck by a lift truck. In such an incident, it's the pedestrian that will suffer an injury or even death. These workers can avoid this by paying attention to the surroundings, staying a safe distance away from forklifts and following proper procedures. That's the purpose of this program—to show viewers the precautions they can take to prevent serious, often traumatic injuries that occur when forklifts come into contact with pedestrians.

Topics include the importance of forklift safety, operating characteristics of forklifts, walking safely around forklift traffic, staying out of the path of a forklift, operator and pedestrian awareness of one another, following safe work practices and avoiding unsafe acts.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY FOR FORKLIFT OPERATORS & PEDESTRIANS

- People and forklifts—they work as a team. While forklifts do the heavy lifting, people are responsible for the planning.
- They're the brains behind the brawn; and, whether on or off the powered industrial truck, safety needs to be job number one.
- Powered industrial trucks, commonly called forklifts, can be very dangerous, both for operators and pedestrians. In fact, 20 percent of accidents in this area involve pedestrians being struck by a truck.
- To stay safe, operators must go through specific training and take refresher courses.
- Anyone at any time can become a pedestrian. "Everyone's a pedestrian; that means everybody needs to understand how to move around the facility safely," says a worker. "There are just too many moving vehicles in the plant to walk around in a daze all the time."
- While traveling through the workplace, you have to be aware of equipment and this includes forklifts.
- To become familiar with them, you need a basic understanding of how they operate.
- "When you first get trained to go out on the floor, you've got to know more than just how to do your job. Your workplace is shared. There are all kinds of hazards, including big moving ones like forklifts," a pedestrian says. "You have to learn to navigate safely around them, kind of like being on the road and sharing the space with other cars."

OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS OF FORKLIFTS

- Forklifts are much heavier than cars and maneuver differently. They are specifically designed to fit in tight spaces.
- To do this, the steering is controlled from the rear. This generates a wide swing radius in the back. For instance, while turning left, the rear end will swing right.
- Operators are generally more focused on the load in front of them as well, so approaching a forklift from behind can put you in the driver's temporary blind spot.
- The back end can swing quickly if the driver backs up or changes direction. To remain safe, stay away from the rear end of the forklift.
- "Because the rear end swings wide, somebody walking can't just pass too close to a moving truck. It's too dangerous," a worker comments.
- Forklifts are designed to move material and this takes place in the front, on the forks. Every load is a different size and shape, but they all have the potential to cause an injury.
- "When you see a forklift, many times it's carrying something and that load makes it heavier and harder to stop and harder to control," adds another employee. "As a pedestrian, you know that makes that forklift much more dangerous. You've got to keep your eyes open at all times."
- A load affects not only the stability of the truck, it also affects its stopping distance. A loaded forklift cannot stop suddenly and if an operator tries to because of a pedestrian in their path, the load can shift, crashing into the pedestrian.
- The forks are also designed to raise and lower loads. Obviously, the higher a load gets, the greater the damage if it should fall; therefore, never walk or work under raised loads.
- "Never, ever go under a raised load. All it takes is one little bump or a slight shift and then gravity takes over. Even with a hard hat on, it's just not safe," a pedestrian says. "And the higher up it goes, the farther away you need to be, just to be out of the line of fire."
- When the forks are low or on the ground, they become tripping hazards, so watch your step when walking around the front of a parked forklift.

WALKING SAFELY AROUND FORKLIFT TRAFFIC

- While out on the factory floor, pedestrians travel along clearly marked pathways. Most of these are designed to keep pedestrians and forklifts a safe distance apart.
- They may consist of signs, painted lines and physical barriers. While traveling or working within these areas, there are rules to follow to help keep you safe.
- While traveling in a pedestrian walkway, keep within the walkway and keep moving. Blocking a walkway could force others to enter into the forklift path.
- Treat intersections like a public street: stop, look left, look right and left again. Listen for forklifts, then proceed when it's safe.
- "I like to look at intersections like a public street. How many times as a kid did you hear 'look both ways before crossing the street?' You wouldn't just run right out into the street," says another worker. "It's the same thing at work. You've got to look out for forklift traffic. Those few extra moments it takes to check for traffic could mean

your life.”

- If the area has a crosswalk, use it. Operators expect to see pedestrians at crosswalks and in aisles, but never assume the driver can see you. Stay alert and make eye contact.
- “Eye contact is key,” says an experienced employee. “Until you make eye contact with the driver, you have to assume, he doesn’t even know you’re there. “
- Look both ways before stepping into an aisle, around a corner or through a door leading into traffic. At blind intersections, anticipate that a forklift will be there until you see otherwise.
- Some intersections have mirrors to improve visibility. Get in the habit of slowing down, checking the mirror to see what’s coming and then proceeding when it’s safe to do so.
- “Mirrors—they’re not just for helping you look good. They’re for helping you to stay safe. Looking in the mirror can give you a heads up as to what’s coming, especially around corners” another pedestrian notes. “I always take a little extra time to check the mirror, because I’ve got to keep this face looking good, and that means not getting hit by a forklift.”
- Inform visitors of the traffic plan before walking out on the floor and while there, pay extra attention to them to keep everyone safe.
- No matter who has the right of way, don’t insist on it. A pedestrian is no match against a heavy vehicle.
- Stay alert to their actions and never take shortcuts around them. Failing to do so can lead to serious injury.

PEDESTRIAN CRUSHED AGAINST LARGE METAL PIPE

- “Johnny had been with the company for quite a while,” says Mike during an interview concerning an incident in which Johnny was struck by a forklift at the plant where they both worked.
- “I always saw him moving around, from one place to another. Like the rest of us he was busy, I guess he had a lot on his mind,” Mike continues. “He seemed distracted, like he was walking somewhere but thinking about something completely different.”
- “One day, I looked up from where I was and there was Johnny, coming around the corner. Forklifts are usually in that area, but they honk their horns at intersections,” Mike adds.
- “Well, this forklift was making a turn and honked his horn. Johnny must have heard it,” Mike says. “I guess he thought he could duck around behind it, but when he did, the forklift backed up.”
- When the forklift backed up, Johnny was crushed between it and a large metal pipe.
- “Whatever you do, you’ve got to pay attention when you’re out on the shop floor and stay out of the path of a forklift,” concludes Mike.
- Don’t assume you know what direction a forklift will go in and never try to “beat” a forklift at a crossing. Distance is the best protection for pedestrians, so give forklifts plenty of room.

OPERATOR & PEDESTRIAN AWARENESS OF ONE ANOTHER

- Some companies require a forklift to be completely stopped before approaching the operator. Others have a three or four foot safety zone around the forklift. Pedestrians should not come within this radius during operation.

- “Approaching a driver should always raise your alarm bell,” notes a female worker. “I remember one of our employees had their foot crushed while talking to a driver; and now, we aren’t allowed within four feet of a truck unless the driver dismounts.”
- In either case, eye-to-eye contact with the driver is essential. Make sure the driver is aware of your presence before moving into a forklift’s work zone.
- In order to make pedestrians more noticeable to drivers, high-visibility vests may be required in areas where forklifts and pedestrians share the work space. This increases the ability of the operator to see those around him.
- Forklifts should be seen and heard. Pedestrians should know the sounds of a forklift, such as the warning horn and the backup alarm.
- Operators should regularly test these vital devices and use them as necessary or where required; however, don’t trust your ears. Electric forklifts can be completely silent and internal combustion units can be hard to hear if they’re coasting or mixed into the sound of a busy factory.
- Hearing protection may also dampen their sound. To overcome this, diligently look for forklifts and equipment in all areas. Keep your head on a swivel, always alert.

FOLLOWING SAFE WORK PRACTICES/AVOIDING UNSAFE ACTS

- Complacency around forklifts can set in the more we work around them.
- “As a pedestrian in a busy factory or warehouse, you could become immune to the noise of constant beeping horns or continuous movement of forklifts, but you better not,” a worker says. “Never let your guard down when you are in forklift traffic areas. One moment of inattention can result in injury or worse. You have to understand, the driver is concentrating on his load and may not be aware of you. It’s your responsibility to stay out of the way, even if you’re supposed to have the right of way.”
- Don’t view forklifts as just another vehicle, like a car. Never be an extra rider unless the forklift is designed for that.
- Do not view a forklift as your personal elevator. Riding the forks is very unstable and can lead to a fall.
- “I saw a guy fall from riding the forks. I guess he felt it was a quick way to raise him up there. Well, it may have been a quick way to get up there, but it was even quicker when he fell,” another pedestrian says. “When you see something like that, you’ll never forget this lesson: Never ride the forks!”
- There are basket attachments that can be fitted onto the forks for raising personnel. When using these attachments, wear all personal protective equipment and stay within the load limit guidelines.
- While operators bear the largest responsibility to keep people safe around forklifts, pedestrians also play an important role in staying safe. Do not intentionally distract drivers and never engage in horseplay where lift trucks are operating; it takes a lot of skill and concentration to maneuver these heavy pieces of equipment.
- Qualified operators have been trained how to use their equipment. Without this training and certification, a pedestrian should never just hop on a forklift and begin using it.
- “Forklifts have a lot of moving parts, and I don’t mean just the wheels. The forks can raise and lower, the mast can tilt and the steering wheel spins,” states a warehouse employee. “Sometimes the load needs to be raised several feet, sometimes it just needs to be moved in carefully by inches. Now, each and every one of these moves takes training and practice to do it safely.”
- Pedestrians can also help operators by following good housekeeping.

- “Some people don’t understand the importance of good housekeeping,” comments a worker. “If your messy work area just flows out into a forklift aisle, and causes a truck to have to maneuver unexpectedly, there’s no telling what could happen.”
- Organize the work place to keep aisles and adjacent areas clear of obstructions.
- Promptly clean up spills and other hazards. Correct or report lighting problems that can affect visibility.
- Finally, pedestrians should pay attention to their surroundings first and foremost, not the documents they may have with them, or a cell phone, or even saying hi to coworkers. Make sure to watch where you're going and stay out of danger zones.
- “It should go without saying that you should watch where you’re going, but I am still amazed at people who walk around with their face stuck in a cell phone. That’s just careless,” says another pedestrian.
- If you see an unsafe behavior, either by an operator or pedestrian, report it. Your words may help prevent an accident.
- “You know, we need to keep in mind that a forklift driver has a job to do and needs to pay attention. You know, don’t shout and wave and throw your hands just for fun and certainly don’t engage in any type of horseplay while he’s driving,” advises a veteran worker. “One of the worst accidents I’ve ever seen was when a forklift driver and his friend were just horsing around.”

CONCLUSION

- Preventing an accident is better than experiencing one. In an accident between a forklift and a pedestrian, it’s the pedestrian that will suffer an injury or even death.
- Pedestrians can avoid this by paying attention to the surroundings, staying a safe distance away from forklifts and following proper procedures.

PREPARE FOR THE SAFETY MEETING

Review each section of this Leader's Guide as well as the program. Here are a few suggestions for using the program:

Make everyone aware of the importance the company places on health and safety and how each person must be an active member of the safety team.

Introduce the program. Play it without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Copy the review questions included in this Leader's Guide and ask each participant to complete them.

Make an attendance record and have each participant sign the form. Maintain the attendance record and each participant's test paper as written documentation of the training performed.

Here are some suggestions for preparing your video equipment and the room or area you use:

Check the room or area for quietness, adequate ventilation and temperature, lighting and unobstructed access.

Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the program.

CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.

Explain that the primary purpose of the program is to show viewers the precautions they can take as pedestrians to avoid being injured or killed by contact with a forklift.

Introduce the program. Play it without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Lead discussions about work areas at your facility where pedestrians and forklifts come into close proximity with each other and the measures that must be taken to avoid incidents and injuries.

After watching the program, the viewer will be able to explain the following:

- Why forklift safety is so important;
- What operating characteristics make a lift truck dangerous to pedestrians;
- How to stay safe while walking in close proximity to forklifts;
- What to be on the lookout for when working near forklift traffic;
- What safe work practices to follow and which unsafe acts to avoid around forklifts.

**FORKLIFT SAFETY LESSONS FOR THE SAFE PEDESTRIAN
REVIEW QUIZ**

Name _____ Date _____

The following questions are provided to check how well you understand the information presented during this program.

1. What percentage of forklift accidents involves pedestrians being struck by a truck?
 - a. 10 percent
 - b. 20 percent
 - c. 30 percent

2. Forklifts are much lighter than cars.
 - a. true
 - b. false

3. A pedestrian should never walk or work underneath the raised load of a forklift.
 - a. true
 - b. false

4. At intersections, you should stop and _____.
 - a. look right and then look left
 - b. look right, look left and right again
 - c. look left, look right and left again

5. Pedestrians should always insist on having the right of way.
 - a. true
 - b. false

6. You should make eye-to-eye contact with a forklift operator before moving into a truck's work zone.
 - a. true
 - b. false

7. A pedestrian who has not been trained to operate a forklift should only get on one to move it a short distance when it is blocking an aisle.
 - a. true
 - b. false

8. If you see unsafe behavior, either by a operator or pedestrian, you should report it.
 - a. true
 - b. false

ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. b

2. b

3. a

4. c

5. b

6. a

7. b

8. a