



## Safety Bulletin

### How to ensure forklift safety in the workplace

No matter how experienced your employees, working with forklifts can pose a serious hazard to staff safety. This machinery doesn't just pose a threat to those operating the machinery, but to pedestrians that are exposed to them in the working environment. Forklifts weigh upwards of 2,000 kilograms, with this number increasing when carrying a load. Their rear counterweights can turn quickly, take time to stop and have several blind spots. All these factors make operating forklifts safely and working around them with care absolutely vital. Here are some tips to improve forklift safety procedures and processes that can mitigate the risk of injury in the workplace.

#### Ensure all operators are qualified

It is imperative that everyone who operates a forklift in the workplace possesses an up-to-date licence permitting them to do so. Each state in Australia has its own laws regarding the type of licence required to operate a forklift, so make sure to familiarise yourself with the one which applies to you. It is not sufficient that there is a licensed operator somewhere on the premises. WorkSafe has a zero-tolerance policy on unsafe or illegal operation of forklifts, dramatically increasing the risk of prosecution for those who cause or tolerate non-compliance with health and safety laws.



#### Stabilise forklift loads and attachments

One of the major causes of forklift injury is improper loading that results in loads falling from forklifts and crushing operators or other staff. Heavy loads that are not secured correctly are a huge risk to pedestrian staff when attempting to help the forklift operator unload or load goods onto a forklift. Your effective forklift safety strategy should ensure that appropriate attachments are used when loading specific types of goods. Any employees who are unsure of how to use such attachments should be trained to do so before they attempt to operate the machinery. It is also important that employees never attempt to overload a forklift and that all loads be correctly stabilised before moving off.

#### Set up safety exclusion zones

Pedestrian workers and forklifts don't mix. For this reason, the two should be separated in the workplace as much as is feasible to minimise the risk of injury and likelihood of accidents. Establishing designated safety exclusion zones for both pedestrians and forklifts should be part of every employers' forklift safety strategy. There are several ways this can be done, including creating physical barriers such as fences, guardrails, boom gates, and even bright tape stuck to the floor. Another option is to create overhead walkways that keep pedestrians elevated above heavy machinery.

#### Pedestrian training

Any employee who is exposed to forklifts in the workplace should undertake correct training that makes them aware of the dangers associated with forklifts and how to best manage and mitigate these risks. Ensure that staff are aware that they should only be close to forklifts if absolutely necessary, that they know the forklift blind spots and, if they do assist in loading/unloading, they are taught the safest method to do so. In any situation, an employee should never be forced to work with a forklift if they feel unsafe or unsure.

#### Complete a checklist

Completing a forklift safety checklist should be part of every operator's daily routine. Before starting a shift, all operators should check their forklift is in safe working order, ready to be used and capable of completing the tasks required of it. [Contact MLA](#) who can provide your business with a forklift safety checklist that meets State based legislative requirements, designed to reduce hazards in the workplace.

#### Driving a forklift on the road

It is important for an employer to note that if a forklift has to be driven outside the workplace on a public road, it must be registered and have number plates. In addition to holding a current forklift licence, the operator must also hold a current driver's licence.

MLA Holdings Pty Ltd can provide you with safety compliance and monitoring, safety prevention, injury management and return to work management. [Contact us](#) today and see how we can help keep your employees and business safe. Information from for this article was sourced from [www.baysidegroup.com.au](http://www.baysidegroup.com.au).

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