



Safety Bulletin

Unsafe Use of Forklifts

It is a truth acknowledged in the materials handling industry that people have done and will continue to do dumb and unsafe things when operating forklifts. Some of these things are intentional while some are accidental; some are the result of laziness and others the result of pure ignorance or poor decision making. In a disturbing trend, there is an increasing number of videos posted online detailing these incidents, most with the intent to shock and entertain. It is a worrying aspect of a larger problem, the general unsafe use of forklifts.

Some of the common unsafe practices employed during forklift use include but are not limited to:

- Allowing untrained, uncertified, unauthorised, or unskilled workers to operate a forklift. Proper training and certification is a requirement.
- Operating a forklift that requires repair. Forklift operators should avoid driving and using a malfunctioning forklift.
- Leaving forklifts running while they are not in use. This is usually a result of laziness and should be avoided at all times.
- Driving a forklift under the influence. Operators should never attempt to operate a forklift while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medications that may affect their ability to operate the forklift safely.
- Forklift racing and forklift jousting have become popular occurrences with bored and unsupervised employees. This is just plain dangerous and shows complete disregard for safety.



A forklift should not be used for anything other than its intended purpose. As many of these online videos show, engaging in these unsafe practices whilst operating a forklift has led to many serious and fatal accidents. Not only does it put people in danger it also tarnishes reputations, including those of employers and industries alike.

There are many tools and practices that you can implement at your workplace to eliminate the unsafe use of forklifts. Effective operator training, reporting near misses, setting up codes of conduct and effective site planning are a good nucleus to a broader safety strategy.

Inbuilt safety features on a forklift will restrict operators to an extent in what they can and can't do when operating a forklift. MLA's Mitsubishi Grendia series are all fitted with a speed limiter, an Integrated Presence System, optional password authentication to prevent unauthorised use of the forklift, and a sequential seat belt interlock, which is a requirement based on the Australian Standard for forklifts, AS2359.

Information for this article was sourced from; www.forkliftbriefing.com. For more information on how to reduce unsafe use of forklifts contact MLA Holdings on 131 MLA or www.mlaholdings.com.au.