

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Road freight transport industry - Forklifts

Forklifts are used to lift, transport and place goods and materials, they include counter-balanced or ride-on forklifts, pedestrian operated forklifts, rough terrain forklifts and a number of specialised forklifts, for example order-picking forklifts and straddle high-lift forklifts.

The operation of forklifts, other than pedestrian operated forklifts, is a prescribed occupation which means that the operator has to be trained and have the correct certificate.

Forklift use is often associated with substantial risks that can result in severe injuries and fatalities to operators and others.

Some simple actions that can be taken to minimise the risks in the work area include:

- clearly defining traffic areas
- separating pedestrians and other vehicles from forklift operation
- isolating loading/unloading areas from high traffic areas
- installing traffic signs where appropriate
- instigating speed restrictions
- using visual aids, for example mirrors, at corners and where vision is obscured
- using transparent doors where needed
- providing adequate lighting
- establishing maintenance and reporting procedures.

Procedures should be established for the use of forklifts. Workers should be consulted

when establishing these and once established they should be passed on to all operators.

Procedures should include the following elements:

- Operator competency: all forklift operators must be trained and assessed in the safe operation of a forklift and the health and safety procedures at the workplace
- Pre-operating safety check: operators should inspect the forklift and any attachments prior to use, each day or shift. The arrangements for this should be clear, especially when more than one operator will use the forklift
- Safe operations: the forklift should only be used for the purpose it was designed for and only operated in a safe manner. Forklifts should be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications regarding design conditions, pressures, loads and control capabilities
- Maintenance and inspection: the maintenance and inspection program should clearly set out the standard to be met and frequency requirements, as well as the procedures to be followed.

For more information on forklifts and other workplace health and safety issues visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

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