

Forklifts (Powered Industrial Trucks): 1910.178

Every three days, someone is killed in an accident involving a lift truck. That shocking statistic adds fire to OSHA data. According to OSHA, 95,000 workers are injured, and approximately 100 are killed each year in accidents involving powered industrial trucks. A known forklift expert stated "The cases I have worked in which there is a fatality almost always cost \$1 million-plus to the employer".

When forklift accidents occur, who is being killed the most.? "Pedestrians top the charts, with minor to major incidents," he says. "More people, more product, more equipment, faster operations and fewer people following simple rules. In most cases pedestrians assume the operator will see them and that they have the right of way, anyway. This may be true, but they can end up being dead right."

Who has right of way when it comes to a forklift and a pedestrian. OSHA states the pedestrian but I think the best answer is "The Other Guy". Operators must always look into the direction of their travel. Some people just never look before moving in that direction. Others do a casual look, which is turning their head about halfway and casually looking that way. This casual look misses many things. There are operators who are late lookers, who do not look until after the already moved a few feet or more. Which are you?

Forklift operators need to take responsibility for pedestrian safety. Properly trained operators know to keep the danger zone around the forklift free of pedestrians whenever possible. The operator is trained and certified by their company and have much more extensive forklift training than a pedestrian. The forklift operator needs to be on the alert for pedestrians at all times.

Remember OSHA expects employers to provide safe workplaces regardless of whether there are written standards and practices in place. To foster a culture of safety, organizations need to take additional steps. Employees should receive operator training for powered industrial trucks that adheres to OSHA standards and which is site-specific, truck-specific and application-specific.

What is forklift training like at your work place? Is it taken seriously? What is the condition of your forklift fleet? Do you know of forklift operators who act like Cowboys or Nascar Drivers? Typically, every facility has a few of these. It all comes down to training and expectations.

OSHA requires that the employer train workers in the safe operation of a forklift. Only certified and authorized individuals are to operate forklifts. OSHA does not certify, accredit or approve any trainers or training programs for powered industrial trucks. The responsibility for compliance with the requirements of the OSHA standard rests with the employer.

OSHA Regulation 1910.178(l)(1)(i)

The "**employer**" shall ensure that each powered industrial truck operator is competent to operate a powered industrial truck safely, as demonstrated by the successful completion of the training and evaluation specified in this paragraph (l).



1910.178(l)(2)(ii)

Training shall consist of a combination of formal instruction (e.g., lecture, discussion, interactive computer learning, video tape, written material), practical training (demonstrations performed by the trainer and practical exercises performed by the trainee), and evaluation of the operator's performance in the workplace. Note: The training can be conducted by the employer or through third party trainers.

1910.178(l)(6)

Certification. The "**employer**" shall certify that each operator has been trained and evaluated as required by this paragraph (l). The certification shall include the name of the operator, the date of the training, the date of the evaluation, and the identity of the person(s) performing the training or evaluation.

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