

MCAA Toolbox Safety Talks

Forklifts



Although there are many different types of forklifts, certain safe operating procedures apply to most of them. You should also know something about working safely around forklifts because in the mechanical industry, when we're not operating forklifts, someone else is probably doing so nearby.

- Operators should be trained on each type of forklift and should always carry their operator's card.
- Always inspect the forklift before you start to use it. This way you can identify any obvious defects that could affect safe operation of the forklift.
- Always check the load capacity of the forklift by checking the identification plate (ID plate). Never attempt to lift a load that exceeds the recommended load capacity. And, never attempt to pick up a load without knowing the load capacity. If the ID plate is missing, check with your supervisor immediately.
- Match the width of the forks to your load.
- Be sure that the load is centered and stable on the forks. Avoid making sudden starts, sudden stops, sharp turns, and traveling across inclines. Any one of these mistakes could cause the forklift to tip over.
- Travel only with the forks in a down position. The forks should be raised only high enough to clear any uneven surfaces.
- If your view to the front is obstructed because of the load, carefully operate the lift in reverse.
- Scan the path ahead and from side to side as you travel.
- When you are working around a forklift, make sure the operator sees you and knows where you will be working.
- Listen for the forklift and be especially alert when it comes your way.