



PARTNERING WITH TOWNSHIPS

TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS OF ILLINOIS RISK MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

# RISK REMINDER

## Forklift Safety

One of the most important but often forgotten tools of the transportation industry is the industrial forklift. Each year, OSHA estimates there are about 85 fatalities, 35,000 serious injuries, and 62,000 non-serious injuries attributed to forklift accidents. The primary cause for forklift fatalities is tipover. The others include being crushed between vehicle and surfaces, crushed between vehicles, fall out of trailer, run over by, and struck by material being transported. Studies have been shown that the great majority of these injuries could have been prevented or lessened by better training. Listed are a few steps in reducing the chances of forklift injuries.



- Operation of a forklift is not like operating a car. The main differences are: much smaller turning radius, different center of gravity, much heavier, and only carries one person at a time.
- Drive safely; slow down to safe operating speeds. Remember: a forklift will very likely tipover if turned at too fast a speed.
- Never let anyone ride along on the forklift
- Never lift anyone on the forks or pallet. Only approved lifts should be used.
- When loading or unloading a truck or trailer, always utilize wheel chocks or secure the drivers keys to prevent movement of the trailer. If you have dock-locks, make sure they function properly.
- Communication between the driver and the operator is essential to have a safe load/unload.
- Never drive fast into a semi trailer to load or unload shipments. This can result in serious damage and injuries from the trailers dollies collapsing.
- Never travel with a load lifted high up-always lower the forks as close to the surface as possible for safe travel.
- Before each shift, each forklift should be inspected by the operator. A complete checklist should be completed for each shift. Proper maintenance is a top priority for safe operating procedures.
- Always know the weight lifting limits for any forklift for safe operation. A load that is too heavy can stress the machine and cause a tipover. The forklift inspection plate clearly states safe operating ranges.
- Always use the seat belt!
- Last but not least: Do not allow anyone to operate a forklift unless that person has been certified. Certification cards last for 3 years. Do not let them expire!



### Questions:

1. **True or False:** It is safe to practice to lift someone on the forks of a forklift to retrieve items. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Don't worry about what the inspection plate lists as a safe lifting limit: if the fork truck is able to lift it, don't worry about it. \_\_\_\_\_
3. It's safe to allow someone to ride along on the forklift. \_\_\_\_\_

**For more information, contact your Loss Control Consultant at (800) 252-5059, ext. 1387 or 1384.**

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