



POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS

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GOAL

This brochure is designed as an aid to employers to provide information regarding the new Powered Industrial Truck regulation. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published a final rule December 1, 1998 Federal Register to clarify training requirements in the regulation (29 CFR 1910.178). The final rule became effective March 1, 1999.

OBJECTIVE

To provide employers with the latest information on training requirements related to the new Powered Industrial Truck regulation.

BACKGROUND

Conservative estimates say there are over 823,000 forklifts in the United States and 1.2 million powered industrial truck operators. The need for training is apparent when one considers the injury statistics, number of operators, number of pieces of equipment and the annual economic and human losses.

The annual injury toll from powered industrial trucks is staggering: 100 fatalities, 35,000 serious injuries, and 61,000 non-serious injuries. These statistics indicate that the existing regulatory requirements may not be working. OSHA has received pressure from safety groups and equipment manufacturers to do more in the regulatory area of required training.

Powered industrial trucks contribute heavily to product and building damage. Fires started as a result of an accident involving fork trucks and spilled loads of flammable substances accounted for losses of 146 million dollars during the years from 1987 - 1992.

MAIN CAUSES of LIFT TRUCK INJURIES

OSHA studies indicate that the causes of powered industrial truck injuries are many and varied. Four types of incidents, however, result in the most injuries: tip-over, pedestrian struck by the lift truck, loads falling on pedestrians, and employees falling from elevated forks.

Tip-over, which does not occur as frequently as other lift truck incidents, is the most dangerous. One out of four forklift fatalities are the result of tip-over; in most cases, the operator is pinned between the overhead guard and a fixed object. Another study indicates that 43 percent of all tip-overs result in injury or death.

OSHA POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCK REGULATION

Under the new OSHA Powered Industrial Truck training program, the employees shall be trained in the following topics unless the employer can demonstrate that some of the topics are not needed for safety operations. The classroom training can be in the form of lectures, video tape programs, interactive computer learning programs or discussions. The classroom and practical exercises must address specific truck-related and workplace-related topics. These topics include the following:

Truck Related Training Topics:

- All operating instructions, warnings and presentations for all types of the truck the operator will be authorized to operate.
- Similarities to and differences from automobiles.
- Controls and instrumentation: location, what they do, and how they work.
- Power plant operation and maintenance.
- Steering and maneuvering.
- Visibility -- including restrictions due to loading.
- Fork and attachment adaption, operation and limitations for their utilization.
- Vehicle capacity.
- Vehicle stability.
- Vehicle inspection and maintenance.
- Refueling or charging, recharging batteries.
- Operator limitations.
- Any other operating instruction, warning or precaution listed in the operator's manual for the type of vehicle the employee is being trained to operate.

Workplace Related Training Topics:

- Surface conditions where the vehicle will be operated.
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- Composition of probable loads and load stability.
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- Load manipulations, stacking and unstacking.
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- Pedestrian traffic.
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- Narrow aisle and other restricted places of operation.
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- Operating in hazardous, classified locations.
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- Operating the truck on ramps and other sloped surfaces that could affect the stability of the vehicle.

- Other unique or potentially hazardous environmental conditions that exist or may exist in the workplace.
- Operating the vehicle in closed environments and other areas where insufficient ventilation could cause a buildup of carbon monoxide or diesel exhaust.

All training must be conducted by individuals who have knowledge, training, and experience to train operators and evaluate their abilities. The practical training exercises must be done under the direct supervision of the trainer in circumstances that will not endanger the trainee or others.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the training, an **evaluation of operator performance must be completed every 3 years**. Additionally, **refresher training is required** if an operator has driven an industrial truck in an unsafe manner, been involved in a near-miss or accident, has received an unsatisfactory evaluation, or if the truck or workplace conditions change.

Employers must certify that each operator has been trained and evaluated. Certification must include the name of the trainee, the trainer, and the dates of training and evaluation. Industrial truck operators hired before December 1, 1999 must have initial training and evaluation by that date (Dec. 1, 1999). Newly employed operators must have training before being assignment to operate a truck.

If management is concerned by the need of employees to spend more time in the classroom and the economic impact, they should consider the amount of money that is lost as a result of product damage, property damage and lost shipments. This, of course, does not include the cost of injuries and associated legal fees and indirect cost.

References:

Videos pertinent to this subject may be obtained, at no cost, from the Arkansas Department of Labor/ Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission's Health and Safety Division Resource Center at (501) 682-9090:

Disclaimer: This brochure is offered for informational purposes only. If there are questions, you should contact the Arkansas Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA Division, or the OSHA web site at www.osha.gov.