

eplica Safety Lines

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The major causes of fatalities on Aerial Lifts are falls, electrocutions and collapses or tip-overs. Follow these safe work practices.

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What You Need To Know About Forklifts



OSHA estimates forklifts cause about 85 fatal accidents per year; 34,900 accidents result in serious injury; and 61,800 are classified as non-serious. According to the **Industrial Truck Association**, there are about 855,900 forklifts in the U.S. Therefore, more than 11% of all forklifts will be involved in some type of accident each year (assuming only one accident per forklift).

The ITA also reports that the useful life of a lift truck is about eight years. That means that about 90% of all forklifts will be involved in some type of accident during their useful life—again assuming only one accident per forklift. If you operate or are in close proximity to this equipment, there is a possibility that you may have an accident at some point during your career. To help reduce the possibility of being injured, it's important to understand where and how these accidents occur.

Forklift fatality causes and where they occur:

Fatal Accident Type	%	Where fatalities occur	%
Crushed by vehicle tipping over	42%	Mining	1.2%
Crushed between vehicle and a surface	25%	Construction	23.8%
Crushed between two vehicles	11%	Manufacturing	42.5%
Struck or run over by a forklift	10%	Transportation	11.0%
Struck by falling material	8%	Wholesale trades	12.5%
Fall from platform on the forks	4%	Retail trade	9.0%

Preventing These Accidents

Studies show that many forklift accidents could have been prevented by better training. No one starts out with the innate knowledge, skills and

abilities to safely operate a forklift. Lift trucks vary in size, capacity and operation. These particulars must be addressed in training sessions before operators are permitted to use the equipment. **As OSHA requires, drivers must be properly trained on the particular piece of equipment they will be operating.**

Issues to be addressed in terms of hazards and safety procedures include:

- ▶▶ Operation of all controls for the lift truck.
- ▶▶ Capabilities of the lift truck. (weights, fork shifting, etc.). This can be found on the placard in the cab and/or in the operations manual.
- ▶▶ Fueling / battery recharging procedures.
- ▶▶ Visibility barriers and back-up alarms.
- ▶▶ Operations in tight aisles, loading ramps, high picks and on inclines.
- ▶▶ Driving procedures. corners, carrying loads, material placement, lift truck speed, etc.

These topics as well as others should be covered in a comprehensive training program. The program should also include a written outline of training topics, a self test or evaluation for the driver, a practical field test (commonly called a lift truck rodeo), and a signed certificate of completion for the course.

Training can also prevent or reduce the severity of an accident related to the stability of a lift truck traveling with an elevated load. Loads should be kept as low as possible to increase vehicle stability and to help prevent tip-over accidents. Even if drivers ignore this rule, and the vehicle tips over, injuries are usually minor if they stay with the vehicle instead of jumping off.

Forty-two percent of forklift fatalities are caused by the operator trying to jump from a tipping vehicle. The normal tendency is for a person to jump downward, so the driver lands on the floor or ground—usually directly into the path of the overhead guard. The most common result is a crushing injury to the head, neck or back, where the overhead guard strikes the employee.

The lesson to be learned is: operating a forklift without training is dangerous and can even be fatal to you or other employees working in the area.



February Safety Tip:

Aerial lifts include boom-supported aerial platforms such as cherry pickers or bucket trucks. The major causes of fatalities are falls, electrocutions and collapses or a tip-over.

- Ensure that workers who operate aerial lifts are properly trained in the safe use of the equipment.
- Use a body harness or restraining belt with a lanyard attached to the boom or basket to prevent the worker(s) from being ejected or pulled from the basket.
- Set the brakes and use wheel chocks when on an incline.
- Do not exceed the load limits of the equipment. Allow for the combined weight of the worker, tools and materials.

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Emergency Action Plan



Who should have an Emergency Action Plan?

There are two different but equally correct answers to this question. The first answer is that OSHA requires an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) only for employers who are covered by certain standards, such as "Fixed Extinguishing Systems" and "Process Safety Management of Highly Hazardous Chemicals" (other standards also require EAPs).

The second answer is that every company really should have an EAP. Not only does OSHA highly recommend it, but also it simply makes sense to have a plan for a safe, orderly response to emergencies such as fires, weather events, releases of hazardous substances, etc. And, note that even relatively minor incidents such as small fires or spills constitute an "emergency" if they trigger an alarm and require employees to stop what they're doing and evacuate their work areas.

What should an EAP contain?

OSHA includes helpful guidelines for EAPs as an appendix to its standard on Exit Routes, EAPs, and Fire Prevention Plans (29 CFR 1910, Subpart E). In brief, the EAP should address any emergencies that might reasonably be expected to happen in the workplace and include:

- ▶▶ Procedures for reporting the emergency.
- ▶▶ Evacuation procedures—ideally, the EAP should include floor plans showing exit routes and assembly points.
- ▶▶ How to account for all employees who have evacuated.

- ▶▶ Responsibilities of any employees who are designated to stay behind and ensure safe shutdown of operations.
- ▶▶ Responsibilities of any employees who may be designated to perform rescue or medical duties.

Good Emergency Response Training

Every employee needs to know what he or she is expected to do and how to do it quickly when an emergency alarm sounds. For most employees, the proper response is simply to evacuate the work area in a rapid but orderly manner using proper exit routes and to assemble in a designated "safe area."

However, some employees—OSHA calls them "evacuation wardens"—should be given the responsibility for making sure that other employees leave the area properly and safely. OSHA recommends one warden for every 20 employees, and suggests that they receive specialized training in:

- ▶▶ Knowing the complete layout of the building or work area, including the various exit routes.
- ▶▶ Giving guidance and instruction to employees during evacuation.
- ▶▶ Knowing how to assist employees, such as those with disabilities, who may need assistance.
- ▶▶ Checking all rooms and enclosed spaces to make sure that no one is left behind.

Why It Matters ...

- OSHA estimates there are approximately 200 workplace deaths and 5,000 workplace injuries each year due to fire, one of the most common types of emergencies.
- In FY 2004, OSHA issued more than 300 citations for violations of its rule on Emergency Action Plans.
- Safety experts agree that knowing how to act quickly and properly in an emergency is the key to saving lives and preventing injuries.

February Safety Quote

"Good housekeeping prevents accidents."