



Forklift Safety

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Ariel lifts - Forklift Operations – Skid Steer

Powered Industrial Trucks (Forklifts) - Only qualified operators who have received training in the safe operation of forklifts are authorized to drive powered industrial trucks.

The following rules apply:

Trucks must be maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Modifications to the truck require the approval of the manufacturer.

All equipment, attachments, and accessories must be stamped or labeled by a testing laboratory or must be approved by a qualified person. Field modifications may not be made without the approval of the manufacturer or a qualified person.

If attachments affect the safe operation or lifting capacity of the truck, the data plates on the truck must be modified to show the new weight of the truck and attachment at maximum elevation with the load laterally centered.

Powered industrial trucks must be inspected daily prior to use. The results of the inspection should be recorded and these records maintained.

Only approved powered industrial trucks may be used in locations with hazardous atmospheres or conditions.

All traffic regulations must be observed, including site speed limits.

Safe distances must be maintained. Approximately three truck lengths from the truck ahead must be maintained so that an emergency stop, if necessary, can be made in the clear distance ahead. Trucks must be kept under control at all times.

Drivers are required to slow down and sound horns at cross aisles and other locations where vision is obstructed.

Uneven surfaces, such as railroad tracks, must be crossed diagonally whenever possible, and parking within 8 feet of the center of the railroad track bed is prohibited.

Drivers are required to look in the direction of travel, and to keep a clear view of the path of travel at all times. Never back up without looking. If the load blocks your view, drive the vehicle in reverse.

Grades are to be ascended or descended slowly and loaded trucks must be driven with the load upgrade on grades in excess of 10%. Unloaded trucks must be operated on all grades with load engaging means (e.g., the forks) downgrade. On all grades, load and load-engaging means must be tilted back if applicable and raised only as far as necessary to clear the road surface.

Under all travel conditions, a truck must be operated at a speed that will permit it to be brought to a stop in a safe manner.

Dockboards or bridge plates are to be driven over carefully and slowly and only after they have been properly secured. Their rated weight capacity must never be exceeded. When loading or unloading highway trucks, be sure the brakes are preset and wheel chocks placed under the rear wheels to prevent the trucks from rolling when they are boarded by power trucks.

Only drive the vehicle onto a lift or elevator if the device has enough capacity to safely handle both the weight of the vehicle and the load. Approach elevators slowly and stop at least 5 feet from the gate. Once on the elevator, neutralize the controls, set the brakes, shut off power, and then step off the truck.

While negotiating turns, speed must be reduced to a safe level by means of turning the hand steering wheel in a smooth, sweeping motion. When maneuvering at a very low speed, the hand steering wheel must be turned at a moderate even rate.

Never run over loose objects on the roadway surface.

Only stable or safely arranged loads must be handled and caution must be exercised when handling off-center loads that cannot be centered.

Only loads within the rated load capacity of the truck must be handled, and long or high (including multiple tiered) loads that may affect capacity must be adjusted.

Load-engaging means must be placed under the load as far as possible and the mast must be carefully tilted backward to stabilize the load.

Extreme care must be exercised when tilting the load forward or backward, particularly when high tiering. Tilting forward with load-engaging means elevated is not permitted except to pick up a load. Elevated loads must not be tilted forward except when the load is in a deposit position over a rack or stack. When stacking or tiering, only enough backward tilt to stabilize the load must be used.

When operating in close quarters, keep hands where they cannot be pinched between steering controls and projecting stationary objects. Keep legs and feet inside the guard or the operating stations of the truck.

Do not use the reverse control on electric trucks for braking.

Park trucks only in designated areas--never in an aisle or doorway, or obstructing equipment or material. Fully lower the load engaging means, neutralize the controls, shut off the power, and set the brakes. Remove the key (or connector plug) when leaving a truck unattended. If the truck is parked on an incline, block the wheels.

Battery Charging – Battery charging installations must be located in areas designated for that purpose. They must have facilities for flushing and neutralizing spilled electrolyte, for protecting charging apparatus from damage by trucks, and for adequate ventilation for dispersal of gases or vapors from gassing batteries. Fire extinguishers must be readily available in the battery charging area, and employees must be trained to use them. Facilities must be available for flushing eyes and skin if acid is splashed or spilled. Racks used for supporting batteries must be made of materials non-conductive to spark generation or be coated or covered to prevent sparks.

An overhead hoist, or equivalent equipment, must be used for handling batteries. Reinstalled batteries must be properly positioned and secured in the truck.

A carboy tilter or siphon must be used for handling electrolyte. Acid must always be poured into water; water must NOT be poured into acid (it overheats and splatters).

During charging operations, vent caps must be removed to avoid electrolyte spray. Make sure that vent caps are functioning. Battery or compartment cover or covers must be open to dissipate heat.

Precautions must be taken to prevent open flames, sparks, or electric arc in battery-charging areas and tools and other metallic objects must be kept away from the tops of uncovered batteries.

Employees charging and changing batteries must be authorized to do the work, trained in the proper handling, and required to wear protective clothing, including face shields, long sleeves, rubber boots, aprons, and gloves.

Smoking is prohibited in the charging area. "No Smoking" signs must be posted.

Internal Combustion Engines - All internal combustion engines must be turned off before refueling. Refueling should be in the open or in specifically designated areas where ventilation is adequate to carry fuel vapors away. Portable fire extinguishers must be readily available in the fueling area, and employees must be trained to use this equipment.

Smoking must not be permitted in the service areas and signs must be posted to that effect.

Hazardous Atmospheres - When trucks are operated in enclosed areas, the concentration of carbon monoxide must not exceed the permissible exposure limits. If you are operating a forklift with an internal combustion engine in an enclosed area, monitoring must be conducted.