



5 Minute Safety Talk

Warehouse Safety

Protect Pedestrians, Reduce Injuries and Improve Safety at your Warehouse

It's a fact: The fatal injury rate for the warehouse industry is **higher than the national average for all industries**, according to OSHA. Many of these injuries occur to pedestrians.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CAUSES OF PEDESTRIAN INJURIES IN WAREHOUSES?

- Unsafe use of forklifts
- Improper stacking of products

HOW CAN YOU REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF PEDESTRIANS BEING INJURED IN YOUR WAREHOUSE?

Use these tips from OSHA to educate forklift operators about potential hazards and how they can avoid striking pedestrians:

- Forklifts should never move at a speed greater than 3.5 mph and should proceed cautiously through congested areas
- When a pedestrian walks across their planned route, the forklift operator should stop and wait for the pedestrian(s) to pass by
- The forklift operator should sound the horn at blind corners, doorways and aisles and when they back up
- Consider mounting warning spotlights on the forklift, which would alert pedestrians, even in noisy workplaces
- Mirrors should be mounted on the lift truck as well as at blind corners
- The operator should use a spotter for blind spots



- Avoid quick stops which can cause a load to continue to move forward and strike someone
- Be sure all forklift operators are trained in the proper use of their vehicles and provide refresher courses when needed

Remind all employees that:

- They need to be aware of their surroundings, staying a safe distance from forklifts
- Approaching a forklift from behind can put the pedestrian in a driver's blind spot
- Loaded lift trucks cannot stop suddenly
- Pedestrians should never walk under a suspended load
- Pedestrians should not ride on a forklift as a passenger



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Suggestions for Plant Safety Managers:

- Be sure regular inspections of lift trucks are performed, to detect any defects in steering, brakes, horn or backup alarm
- Consider separating pedestrians from lift trucks by providing pedestrian walkways
- Install railings or other protective barriers

Another important consideration: Materials should be handled and stored safely around the warehouse

- Loads of materials should be stacked evenly, with heavier loads placed on lower or middle shelves
- All chemicals should be stored according to the manufacturer's recommendations
- Keep aisles and passageways clear
- Bags, containers and bundles should be stored in tiers that are limited in height to prevent falling hazards

Everyone can play a part in reducing warehouse injuries.

By navigating the warehouse carefully, forklift operators can help prevent incidents. Pedestrians can help by paying close attention to forklifts in the area. And managers can ensure that aisles are clear and materials are properly stored.

TOGETHER, WE CAN KEEP EACH OTHER SAFE!

References

Government Institutes, Warehouse Safety. *A Practical Guide to Preventing Warehouse Incidents and Injuries* by George Swartz, CSP

National Safety Council, *Lift Truck Operator*

Occupational Safety and Health Administration, *Powered Industrial Trucks (Forklift), Pedestrian Traffic*

ANSI-ITSDF B56, 1a-2018 section 5.320 Occupational Safety and Health Administration, *OSHA Pocket Guide, Worker Safety Series: Warehousing*

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