



Driving Your Forklift

Forklifts are powerful machines, and while they don't go as fast as cars or trucks, they require even more attention to safety. Most forklift accidents result from operator error, so even the most experienced forklift drivers need to review and follow basic forklift safety rules.



Before You Drive

Check safety devices each day before you drive. Your horn, lights, brakes, and backup alarm help you avoid potential accidents, and they should work correctly before you start the engine. Look around for any hazards you may encounter on your route (pedestrians, unstable loads, or obstacles) and figure out how to correct them. Some hazards may be challenging to spot once you're operating your vehicle.

Watch for Pedestrians!

Pedestrians are involved in a majority of forklift injuries. Prevent pedestrian accidents by keeping others' safety in mind when you drive. Drive in reverse when a high load blocks your vision. In a crowded building with lots of noise, don't be distracted. Use a spotter to help avoid blind spots.

Safety First

A forklift is different from a car. Because forklifts are steered by the rear wheels, they require different steering techniques. They're also taller and narrower than a car and can tip over more easily. Reduce your risks by putting safety first.

Driving Basics

- Avoid sharp turns and fast speeds. Forklifts aren't built to handle either. A sharp, fast turn can shift your load and cause you to tip over. Forklifts are not designed for horseplay or stunt driving.
- Whenever possible, keep loads low. Too tall or top-heavy loads can obstruct your vision or cause you to tip over.
- Drive backward when you must move a high load and face the direction of travel.
- It's safer to drive backward down slopes with more than a 10% incline. If you have to park on a slope, always block the wheels and lower forks and set the parking brake.
- Never carry hitchhikers unless the forklift has approved people-lifting devices.
- Keep loads within your vehicle's capacity. Never raise or lower loads while moving. Start and stop gradually to avoid load shifting.
- Don't speed. Use your horn at corners, crossings or before reversing. Back out slowly after unloading, check over your shoulder to make sure the coast is clear.



