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Forklift Safety... It's Uplifting

Ready Mixed Concrete Industry and Forklifts

Forklifts (powered industrial trucks) are found at most ready mixed concrete plants around the nation. From lifting blocks to raising boxes of fibers, a forklift is a powerful tool that allows ready mixed concrete personnel to precisely lift and place large heavy loads with little effort. Forklift operators and other ready mixed concrete employees working around these operations are at risk of hazards such as collisions, falls, tip-overs, and struck-by conditions. According to OSHA, every year nearly 100 workers are killed and 20,000 are seriously injured in forklift mishaps across the country. OSHA also lists forklift violations as the 7th most frequently cited standard.

What to Know About Forklifts

Operators should be familiar with the forklift data plate which includes maximum height and load capacities and always preform pre-use inspections, usually at the beginning of their shift. Operators must not modify the forklift without manufacturers' approval. Battery charging stations should be designated and designed for that purpose with no smoking and no open flames in the area. Loading docks should be well lit, ventilated, with dock boards and bridge plates. Dock procedure training is a must. No person should pass under the elevated forks, and unless otherwise designed, don't allow riders (operators only). Make sure spotter/helpers use proper hand signals, make eye contact, and stay clear of the forklift while in transit. Where your vision is obstructed the operator should travel in reverse. When ascending or descending grades more than 10 percent, loaded forklifts must be driven with the load upgrade. Operators must wear a seatbelt when operating the forklift. Finally, ready mixed concrete companies must put a priority on forklift training specific to their operations.



Forklift Dos and Don'ts

- Think first, obey all safe operating procedures
- Always wear a seatbelt
- When unloading semitrailers set brakes and chock
- When unattended, lower load, set controls in neutral, set brakes, ignition off
- Railroad tracks should be crossed diagonally
- Keep speed below 5 mph
- Load capacities should never be exceeded
- No horseplay, distracted operating or mobile phone use while in operation
- Be aware of pedestrian traffic, narrow aisles, surface conditions
- Never raise the load more than necessary
- Train initially and reevaluate every 3 years



Resources

OSHA: [Powered Industrial Trucks \(Forklifts\) eTool](#)

OSHA: [Forklift Safety Quick Card](#)

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