

FORKLIFTS AND TOW MOTORS

SAFETY POLICY MANUAL - SECTION 1 - POLICY NO. SM 1.14



SAFETY DEPARTMENT | 6001 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD MOON TOWNSHIP, PA 15108

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1. POLICY/PURPOSE

Only trained and authorized operators shall be permitted to operate industrial forklifts and tow motors.

2. SCOPE:

This procedure establishes minimum standards for the safe and efficient operation of forklifts and tow motors. This procedure applies to all fork lifts and tow motors owned or operated by Robert Morris University.

3. PROCEDURES:

A. INSPECTIONS

An inspection is required prior to use every day that the forklift is used and when deemed necessary. If it is found to be unsafe, the matter shall be reported immediately to a supervisor, tagged as out of service and the vehicle not put in service again until it is repaired. The repair and any other corrective actions will be documented on the inspection checklist that identified the deficiencies. Attention is to be given to the proper functioning of tires, horn, lights, battery, brakes, steering mechanism, and the life system of forklifts. Inspection checklists that have been filled out should be kept in clipboard that is attached to forklift.

B. OUT OF SERVICE

If forklift is found to be unsafe during inspection or at any other time it is to be noted on inspection checklist. An “OUT OF SERVICE” tag is to be applied to forklift and not removed until repairs have been made and forklift is deemed safe for use again.

C. GENERAL

1. No modification to equipment which could affect vehicle capacities or safe operation.
2. Maintain all nameplates and similar markings in legible condition, which identifies approval of such equipment.

D. OPERATIONS

The Forklift and Tow Tractor Checklist, reproduced following this Procedure are to be used to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph. Checklists should be kept with the vehicle or in the supervisor’s office and maintained for a period of six months by the supervisor.

1. The authorized or safe speed is not to be exceeded. Each driver is to maintain a safe distance from other vehicles, keeping his vehicle under positive control at all times. All established traffic regulations are to be observed. For forklifts traveling in the same direction, a safe distance may be considered to be approximately 3 lengths, or preferably a time lapse – 3 seconds – passing the same point.
2. Stunt driving and horseplay are prohibited.
3. Loaded vehicles are not to be moved until the load is safe and secure.
4. When a driver leaves a vehicle unattended, the power must be shut off, brakes set, the mast brought to the vertical position, and forks left in the down position. When left on an incline, the wheels must be blocked. Keys are to be removed from vehicles parked in isolated areas.

NOTE: Do not depend on a seat brake unless that is the only parking brake on the equipment. Always use hand brake, if available.

- A powered industrial forklift is unattended when the operator is 25 feet or more away from the vehicle which remains in his view or whenever the operator leaves the vehicle and it is not in view.
 - When the operator of an industrial forklift has dismounted and is within 25 feet of the vehicle still in his view, the load-engaging means must be fully lowered, controls neutralized, and the brakes set to prevent movement.
5. Forklifts are not to be driven up to anyone standing in front of a fixed object of such size that the person could be caught between the vehicle and the object.
 6. Operators are to look or face in the direction of travel and not move a vehicle until certain that all persons are in the clear.
 7. Vehicles are not to be operated on floors or platforms that will not safely support the loaded vehicle.
 8. Riding on the forks of lift tracks is prohibited.
 9. Forks must always be carried as low as possible, consistent with safe operation (normally, approximately four (4) inches above the running surface).
 10. Extreme care is to be used when tilting loads.
 11. Forklifts are not to be driven in and out of highway trucks and trailers at unloading docks until such trucks are securely blocked by wheel chocks and brakes set. Should the tractor not be attached to the trailer, the trailer must be supported via a jack stand. Forklift operators should verify this prior to entering the trailer.
 12. Employees must not place any part of their body outside the running lines of the forklift or between mast uprights or other parts where shear or crushing hazards exist.
 13. Employees are not allowed to stand, pass, or work under the elevated portion of any forklift, loaded or empty, unless it is effectively blocked to prevent it from falling.
 - The forks of a forklift are never to be used to elevate a person to a higher level, unless a proper platform with guardrails is provided and the platform is fastened to the mast.
 14. The width of one (1) tire on the forklift is the minimum distance from the edge to be maintained while it is on any elevated dock, platform, or freight car.
 15. Prior to driving onto trucks, trailers, and railroad cars, their flooring must be checked for breaks and other structural weaknesses.
 16. Other forklifts traveling in the same direction are not to be passed at intersections, blind spots, or dangerous locations.
 17. Drivers are to slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles and other locations where vision is obstructed.
 18. If the load being carried obstructs forward view, the drivers are to travel with the load trailing.
 19. Grades must be ascended or descended slowly.
 - When ascending or descending grades in excess of 10%, loaded forklifts must be driven with the load upgrade.
 - On all grades, the load and load-engaging means are to be tilted back if applicable, and raiser only as far as necessary to clear the road surface.

20. Forklifts must not be loaded in excess of their rated capacity.
21. Forklifts are not to be operated with a leak in the fuel system.
22. Extreme care is to be taken when tilting loads. Tilting forward with the load engaging means elevated is prohibited except when picking up a load. Elevated loads are not to be tilted forward except when the load is being deposited onto a storage rack or equivalent. When stacking or teetering, backward tilt is limited to that necessary to stabilize the load.
23. The load-engaging device must be placed in such a manner that the load will be securely held or supported.
24. Special precautions are to be taken in the securing and handling of loads by forklifts equipped with attachments, and during the operation of these vehicles after the loads have been removed.
25. The wearing of seat belts is mandatory when operating any type of industrial tractor equipped with ROPS (roll-over protective structure).

4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

Departments currently operating such equipment include: Facilities Management, Conference & Facility Service and ISC Operations.

Contractors and Third Party Service Vendors are responsible for safety and training in accordance to OSHA standards.

A. SAFETY / DEPARTMENT COMPLIANCE MANAGERS:

- Implement and administer the fork truck training program and assure personnel are trained on the procedures set forth in this standard.
- Audit the procedures of this standard at least annually to assure it is followed and document the audit.

B. SUPERVISORS:

- Assure that each employee in his/her group is trained, understands and follows the procedures outlined in this policy.

5. TRAINING:

Operators of forklifts and tow motors must be trained and authorized. Training shall consist of a combination of formal instruction, practical training, and evaluation of the operator's performance in the workplace. Persons who have the knowledge, training, and experience in fork truck operations and can evaluate operator's competence shall conduct training.

A. The truck related training program shall contain the following content:

1. Operating instructions, warnings, and precautions for the types of truck operated.
2. Differences between the truck and the automobile.
3. Truck controls and instrumentation.
4. Engine or motor operation.
5. Steering and maneuvering.
6. Visibility (including restrictions due to loading)
7. Fork and attachment adaptation, operation, and use limitations

8. Vehicle capacity
 9. Vehicle stability
 10. Vehicle inspection and maintenance that the operator will perform
 11. Refueling and charging batteries
 12. Operating limitations
 13. Any other operating instructions, warnings, or precautions in the operator's manual
- B. The workplace related training program shall contain the following content:
1. Surface conditions where the vehicle will be operated
 2. Composition of loads to be carried and load stability
 3. Load stability, manipulation, stacking and un-stacking
 4. Pedestrian traffic in areas where the vehicle will be operated
 5. Ramps, narrow aisles
 6. Hazardous locations and environments
 7. Closed environments and other areas where insufficient ventilation could cause a buildup of carbon monoxide
- C. Refresher Training – shall be provided:
1. When an operator has been observed operating the vehicle in an unsafe manner.
 2. When an operator has been involved in an accident or near miss.
 3. When an operator has received an evaluation that reveals he/she is not operating in a safe manner.
 4. When an operator is assigned to operate a different type of truck.
 5. When a condition in the workplace changes that affects safe operation of the truck.
- D. Operator Education:
1. An evaluation of each operator's performance shall be conducted every 3 years.
- E. Operator Certification – verification/certification that each operator has been trained and evaluated shall include:
- a. Name of operator.
 - b. Date of training.
 - c. Date of evaluation.
 - d. Identity of person performing the training or evaluation.
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Implementation Date: June, 2006

Last Reviewed/Revised: May 2021

Attachment A: Forklift Inspection Checklist