

Forklift Safety Program



Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management Department

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I. Introduction

Powered industrial trucks, commonly called forklifts, are used on the SFA campus to move materials. They can also be used to raise, lower, or remove large objects or a number of smaller objects on pallets or in boxes, crates, or other containers. Forklift operators and employees working around these operations are at risk of hazards such as collisions, falls, tip-overs, and struck-by accidents.

The purpose of this Forklift Safety Program is to communicate safe operational practices to reduce the risk of accidents and injuries in areas where forklifts are in operation on the SFA campus. This program has been developed in compliance with the OSHA safety standard 29 CFR 1910.178. This program also establishes a documented safety training and equipment operator certification process to ensure all SFA employees operating a forklift have been properly trained in the applicable safety procedures.

II. Responsibilities

A. Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management (EHSRM)

1. Maintain the written Forklift Safety Program,
2. Retain all program records as required by SFA's record retention policy;
3. Conduct forklift safety training;
4. Issue forklift operator certifications upon completion of training; and
5. Periodically observe forklift operators to ensure compliance.

B. Supervisors

1. Be familiar with the forklift safety procedures described in this manual;
2. Ensure proper maintenance and repairs to forklift equipment;
3. Ensure employees or students are trained in and use proper forklift procedures;
4. Notify EHSRM of any new or re-assigned employees who will need to operate a forklift to ensure proper training and certification occurs before equipment operation. EHSRM can be contacted through email at: safety@sfasu.edu or by calling 468-4442.
5. Periodically observe forklift operators to ensure safe work practices; and
6. Ensure forklift operators comply with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.178.

C. Forklift Operators

1. Complete the required forklift safety training program and certification process prior to operating a forklift;
2. Conduct a safety inspection of the forklift prior to each use (the checklist is provided in *Appendix A* on page 6 of this document);
3. Use all equipment and safety features in the correct manner; and
4. Notify your supervisor promptly if any maintenance or repairs are needed.

III. Forklift Safety Procedures

A. Pre-Use Safety Inspection

- At the beginning of each shift, the Safety Inspection Checklist found in *Appendix A* on page 6 must be completed. This pre-use inspection should be conducted at the beginning of every work shift involving the use of a forklift, and whenever a new equipment operator takes control of the equipment. Visual checks should also be completed throughout the day.
- Any safety defects (such as hydraulic fluid leaks; defective brakes, steering, lights, horn, seat belt, or back-up alarm) must be reported to your supervisor for immediate repair. If a problem is identified, tape the inspection checklist to the steering wheel and take the keys to your supervisor to take the forklift out of service until necessary repairs are completed.

B. Operating Procedures

- Wear the seat belt at all times.
- Sound the horn and use extreme caution when meeting pedestrians making turns, turning corners, and entering roadways.
- Passengers are never allowed to ride on a forklift.
- Arms or legs may not be placed between the uprights of the mast or outside the running lines of the lift.
- Never stand or pass under any elevated portion of a forklift.
- Travel pathways must be maintained free from obstructions, aisles must be marked, and wide enough (six-foot minimum) for vehicle operation.
- Maintain sufficient headroom under overhead installations such as: lights, pipes, sprinkler systems, etc.
- The overhead guard must remain in place to protect against falling objects.
- Lift capacity must be marked on all forklifts and never exceeded. Larger loads will require the use of a larger forklift capable of handling the weight of the load.
- When a forklift is left unattended (more than 25ft. away or out of sight), the forks must be fully lowered, power shut off, and brakes set. Wheels must be blocked if the truck is parked on an incline.
- All modifications must be approved by the manufacturer, and new rated load capacities determined and posted on the truck. Written approval is required.
- Operators must report all accidents, regardless of fault and severity, to their supervisor.

C. Loading Procedures

- Only handle loads within the rated capacity of the forklift.
- Loads should be safely arranged, stable, and centered – always use caution when handling loads.
- Forklifts equipped with attachments must be operated as a partially loaded forklift and the weight of the attachment should be accounted for in regards to weight capacity.
- The forks must be placed under the load as far as possible. The mast must be carefully tilted backward to stabilize the load.
- Use extreme care when tilting the load forward or backward, particularly when handling tall loads or loads that may become unstable. Tilting the forks forward while elevated is prohibited except to pick up a load.

- When stacking materials, use only enough backward tilt to stabilize the load.

D. Traveling Procedures

- Never raise or lower a load while traveling.
- Slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles, pathway intersections, and other locations where vision is obstructed.
- If the load being carried obstructs forward view, the driver must travel in reverse.
- Loads must be tilted back and carried no more than six inches above the ground.
- Grades must be ascended and descended slowly. Position the load uphill relative to the operator when ascending or descending grades.
- Stunt driving and horseplay are strictly prohibited.

E. Fueling Procedures

- Fuel tanks may not be filled while the engine is running. Avoid spilling fuel. If a spill occurs while fueling, oil or fuel must be absorbed using oil dry, cat litter, or vermiculite
- Any spill clean-up debris must be collected in a bucket, barrel, or other puncture resistant container. Notify EHSRM at 468-4442 for proper disposal.
- Never operate a truck with a leak in the fuel system.

F. Changing and Charging Batteries

- Battery charging must be located in areas designated for that purpose.
- Typically, the motorpool auto shop should service batteries when needed unless approved by the department supervisor. Facilities must provided for: flushing and neutralizing spilled electrolyte, fire protection, protection of charging apparatus from damage by trucks, adequate ventilation for dispersal of fumes from gassing batteries.
- Precautions must be taken to prevent open flames, sparks, or electric arcs in battery charging areas.
- Employees charging and changing batteries shall 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.

IV. Training Requirements

Employees who are authorized to operate a forklift must receive training prior to using the equipment, and at least every three (3) years thereafter. The training is to ensure that all responsibilities and procedures described in the Forklift Safety Program are made known and understood. The supervisor will also ensure that authorized forklift operators have acquired the necessary practical skills required for safe operation. Training is offered by EHSRM, and authorized department trainers. Department trainers must be approved by EHSRM and be experienced operators who have the knowledge, training, and skills necessary to evaluate the competence of operators. Training will consist of a combination of classroom safety instruction, hands-on training, and evaluation of the operator's performance in the workplace.

A. Initial Training

The initial training will consist of the following information:

- Complete instruction on the safety procedures described in this program.

- Intended purpose and function of each control.
- Prior to operating any forklift, the trainee will receive training by a qualified person on the contents of the manufacturer's operating instruction(s) and this safety program.
- The forklift's operating limitations and restrictions as defined by the manufacturer.
- Explanation of all controls, decals, warnings, and instructions displayed on the forklift.
- All training and evaluation must be completed before an operator is permitted to use a forklift without supervision. An operator certification card will be issued by EHSRM upon successful completion of the training.

B. Refresher Training

Refresher training will be conducted every three years or after an accident or injury involving a forklift. The refresher training will include:

- Review of the Pre-Use Safety Inspection form.
- Review of manufacturer's weight capacity and specifications.
- Review of all safety procedures outlined in this program.
- Updated information on new equipment as needed.

C. Annual Evaluations

The Safety Department will conduct annual evaluations of this safety program and notify supervisors and forklift operators if any changes or updates are made. Additionally, the Safety Officer (in conjunction with department supervisors) will evaluate equipment, safety devices, and operator performance. Retraining will be conducted if needed.

Any training conducted by an authorized department trainer must be documented and emailed to EHSRM at safety@sfasu.edu or campus mail Box 6113. An operator certification card will then be issued.

For any questions or concerns related to the safe operation of forklifts on the SFA campus, contact EHSRM at 468-4442 or email: safety@sfasu.edu.

Appendix A

Forklift Safety Inspection Checklist

Check each item before using the forklift each day. Put a check in the box if the item is OK. Explain any unchecked items in writing at the bottom of this form and immediately report them to your supervisor.

Do not use an unsafe forklift. Your safety is at risk! If a problem is identified affecting the safety of the forklift, tape this checklist to the steering wheel and take the keys to your supervisor to take the forklift out of service until proper repairs have been made.

Forklift Model or Identification Number: _____

Operator Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Hour Meter Reading: _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	Visual Check
	Tires are inflated and free of excessive wear or damage.
	Forks & Mast are not bent or cracked.
	Load Back Rest is in place and not bent, cracked, or loose.
	Overhead Guard is in place and not bent, cracked, or loose.
	Attachments (if equipped) function properly and are not damaged.
	Forklift Body is not damaged and is free of excessive grease or oil.
	Engine Oil is full and free of leaks.
	Hydraulic Oil is full and free of leaks.
	Radiator is full and free of leaks.
	Fuel Level is OK and free of leaks.
	Battery Connections are tight.
	Covers over the battery and other hazardous parts are in place and secure.
	Load Rating Plate is present and readable.
	Warning Decals are present and readable.
	Seat Belt is accessible and not damaged.
	Engine runs smooth and quiet.
	Horn works.
	Turn Signal (if equipped) operates correctly.
	Lights (head, tail, & warning) work properly.
	Gauges & Instruments are working.
	Lift & Lower operates smoothly without excessive drift.
	Tilt operates smoothly without excessive drift or “chatter”.
	Control Levers are labeled, not loose or binding, and freely return to neutral.
	Steering is smooth, responsive, and free of excessive play.
	Brakes work and function smoothly without grabbing. No fluid leaks.
	Parking Brake is tight and will hold the forklift on an incline.
	Backup Alarm (if equipped) works.