

FORKLIFTS

Forklifts assist us with various tasks around a construction site. Most of us take them for granted without giving a great deal of thought to safety, whether we're operating them or working near them.

A forklift is designed to pick up heavy objects and move them from one place to another, or raise heavy or bulky loads to high levels. Lumber, brick, block, shingles, bags of concrete and tubs of mortar are just a few examples of material that can be moved by forklift on a construction site. Various other types of business use them to perform innumerable lifting tasks.

A forklift should only be operated by a trained, competent person. Never let someone operate a forklift who is not qualified to drive.

Inspect your forklift prior to use. Check the mast for any broken or cracked weld-points. Be sure the forks are spaced apart equally and free from cracks. Check the tires for proper inflation and the fuel and hydraulic fluid levels.

Some forklifts are battery powered; others use gasoline or diesel, and some use propane. If your forklift is battery powered be sure you DO NOT SMOKE in the charging area. If the lift is propane powered be sure you change the fuel cylinder outside, away from any buildings, and remember NO SMOKING is the rule. As always, NO SMOKING when refueling with gasoline or diesel.

After completing your inspection get in the cab and buckle up the seat belt. With your foot on the brake, put the gearshift lever in the neutral position and turn the key. Be sure to check all gauges, controls and brakes before moving, and then watch out for all workers in your area of operation. Prior to making any lift be sure you know the capacity of the forklift. This information is located on the manufacturer's ID plate. You must also know the weight of what you are going to lift. If in doubt, or if you have any questions, check with your supervisor.

IF THE LOAD BLOCKS YOUR VISION IN THE FRONT, DRIVE IN REVERSE OR USE A SIGNAL PERSON. DON'T TAKE CHANCES!

