

Safety Note #160

GENERAL FORKLIFT SAFETY

Forklifts, which are also defined as industrial trucks, are important to the operation of many ANR facilities. Forklifts are a potential source of serious accidents and injuries in the workplace. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, each year in the US, nearly 100 employees are killed and another 20,000 are seriously injured in forklift-related incidents. California regulations (Title 8, Article 25) states the requirements for forklift operations. **Safety Note #163 Forklift Training Requirements and Videos E-002 Forklift Fundamentals and E-033 A Guide to Forklift Safety are available from the ANR EH&S Website at <http://safety.ucanr.org>. This Safety Note is not a substitute for a complete training program.**

Pre-Use Activities

- Only operators authorized by the employer and trained in the safe operations of forklifts shall be permitted to operate forklifts. Employees being trained must be supervised by the trainer.
- Operators must review and understand the information provided in the forklift operator's manual with particular attention given to safety and maintenance procedures.
- A pre-shift forklift inspection. Attention shall be given to the functioning of tires, horns, lights, battery, controller, brakes, steering mechanism, cooling system, fuel system and the lift system for forklifts (forks, chains, cable, and limit switches).
- The rated capacity plate must be in legible condition and in view of the operator.
- If a forklift fails the pre-shift inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the forklift from service by attaching a red tag that states "DANGER" or "DO NOT USE" and removing the key.

Operating Precautions

- Before operating a forklift, check the work area and plan for hazards including, pedestrians, weather, obstructions, vehicles, types of terrain and loads to be transported.
- Loads shall not exceed rated capacity of forklift and be secured to prevent tipping and falling.
- Stunt driving and horseplay are prohibited and no riders are allowed on the forks of the lift truck.
- No forklifts are to be operated with a fuel leak in the fuel system.
- Steering knobs shall not be used unless the forklift is equipped with power steering.
- Fork extensions and other attachments shall be secured and used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Employees shall not be 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.
- Seatbelts must be provided and used on all forklifts with rollover protection installed.
- Operators shall look in the direction of travel and not move the forklift until certain that all persons are in the clear.
- The operator shall slow down and sound the horn at locations where vision is obstructed. If the load obstructs forward view, the operator shall travel with the load trailing.
- Grades shall be ascended or descended slowly and forks always be carried as low as possible, consistent with safe operations.
- When parked the forks must be resting flat on the surface and brakes set in place.