



**Operational Alerts** inform Signal Mutual Members of serious incidents within the Mutual that resulted in permanent disability, death, or a significant near miss. If you have similar operations, please share this Operational Alert and have a safety discussion with operation managers, supervisors, equipment operators, and all affected employees. It is imperative that management review their operational controls at all levels to mitigate similar hazardous conditions and/or acts.

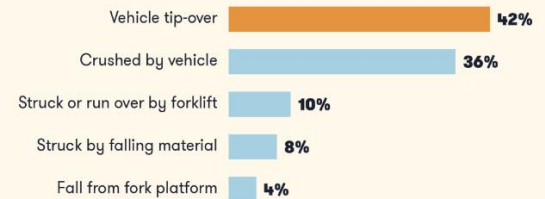
## FORKLIFT INCIDENTS REVIEW

In the past five years, there have been 400 forklift-related injuries across the Signal Mutual Membership. OSHA estimates that there are nearly 100,000 forklift accidents each year. This does not include close calls, which are estimated to be 2 to 5 times the number of actual incidents. Please use this Operational Alert to educate your workforce on preventive actions and best practices.

### SUMMARY OF INCIDENTS

The 400 forklift incidents within Signal Mutual resulted in employee bodily harm including shoulder, ankle, foot, and back injuries. Beyond the cuts, broken bones, sprains, and strains, there have also been fatalities and amputations. These incidents forever affected the employees, their families, and other Member employees who saw the accidents. Operations were adversely affected and costs to the Member and the Mutual were in the millions of dollars. What makes these events more tragic is they were preventable. Powered industrial trucks (forklifts) operate in facilities on a constant basis. Whether in the warehouse, traveling between shops, on the dry dock, or along the water's edge, there are hazards that the forklift operator and employees must be aware of.

### Primary Causes of Major Forklift Accidents



### CONSIDERATIONS

Forklifts and other mobile equipment such as Rubber Tire Gantrys (RTGs) or container handlers, present unique risks since operator visibility may be limited, roadways may be congested, and employee walking paths may place them in a position of risk if not paying attention. Forklift (and all mobile equipment) safety means making all employees, not just the operators, aware of these hazards.

#### Operator considerations:

- Only certified and trained employees should operate forklifts.
- Operators should never assume that employees are clear of the equipment swing radius. Before driving, at every stop and before changing direction or turning, the operator must first conduct a 360° assessment to look for nearby personnel before proceeding.
- Operators must control speed to avoid hitting a person or another object.
- Operators must wear seatbelts and keep all body parts within the equipment when in operation.
- Materials transported on a forklift should be secured so it cannot fall off and crush anyone nearby.
- Never drive with the forks up, never use the forklift to push other vehicles, and never pass a forklift going in the same direction, especially at blind spots, intersections, or other dangerous areas.
- Use the forklift's horn, mirrors, and lights to let others know when the forklift is in operation.
- Ensure both the forklift and its load are stable when in use.
- Remember forklifts are not maneuverable, it takes 22 feet for a forklift traveling at 10 mph to come to a full stop on a dry surface.
- Inspect the forklift before use and if maintenance is not up to date, do not operate the equipment.

#### Pedestrian/other employee considerations:

- Pedestrians and employees have the right-of-way when a forklift is being operated. However, any person near a forklift (or any moving equipment) must not take for granted that the forklift/equipment operator sees them. The person walking or standing must be aware of their surroundings at all times and never turn their back to mobile equipment.
- Employees must not stand near mobile equipment, especially in zones where the operator may not see them, or the swing radius of the forklift may hit them. No one should ever walk under the forks when they are raised (suspended in the air), even if the forklift is not carrying a load.

**Videos:** Viewer discretion advised. Signal Safety included these videos for training and awareness in the hope that Mutual Members can prevent similar instances from reoccurring. Crush- <https://vimeo.com/780744394/e125cbca0c>  
Close call- <https://vimeo.com/779735056/f8e6d6df2b>