



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.

INCIDENT: PEDESTRIAN-FORKLIFT INTERFACE

The work in our industry often requires the use of powered industrial trucks to move materials and cargo. The frequent use of heavy machinery increases the likelihood of forklift pedestrian interface and the significant consequences associated with a struck-by incident. The Mutual Membership recently experienced two forklift-pedestrian struck-by incidents that resulted in severe injuries. Both incidents are still under investigation and the full breadth of corrective actions is still being analyzed. Please use this informational alert to educate your workforce on the initial facts, preventive actions, and best practices.

SUMMARY OF RECENT INCIDENTS:

Incident #1: Dock Worker Struck by 36k-lb Capacity Forklift

After a brief conversation with the operator while standing adjacent to the operator's cab, a pedestrian dock worker walked toward the rear of the machine and stood on the left side of the rear counterweight. A few moments later, the operator cut the steering wheel to the right and proceeded to drive the forklift forward, striking the pedestrian with the rear left tire.



Incident #2: Checker Struck by Forklift in Warehouse

A forklift operator was entering a warehouse carrying paper rolls in a squeeze clamp and struck a checker, knocking him to the floor directly in front of the forklift. The operator, not seeing or knowing he had struck the checker, set the paper rolls down onto the checker's left leg.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Operators must ensure that their travel path is clear before operating the forklift. If necessary, the operator should get out of the vehicle to ensure the pathway is clear. A few seconds of prevention can avoid significant accidents.
- Use aids such as spotters, mirrors, and other aids to increase visibility and to ensure your travel path is clear. Understand if blind spots exist that must be considered before moving. Ensure backup warning alarms are working.
- The use of technology such as camera systems and proximity warnings should not be viewed by the operator as a substitute for traditional operator best practices but rather a supplement to aid their safe operation.



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- Pedestrians must maintain a safe distance from forklifts. Move well away from the forklift, given wide swing distances that arise. Never assume that the forklift operator can see you or understands your intended path of travel.
- Electronic devices, including but not limited to phones, are unsafe to use during the operation of or working around powered industrial trucks. Maintain vigilance and do not get distracted.
- Be mindful of the rapid swing of the back of the forklift created by rear-wheel steering. This can catch pedestrians by surprise, particularly those new to the work environment. Look 360 to ensure the pathway is clear.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Visit <https://www.signalmutual.com> for training materials, toolbox talks, and operational alerts.
- For access to forklift regulatory standards and educational materials, visit the following link: <https://www.osha.gov/powerd-industrial-trucks>.
- OSHA Powered Industrial Truck e-Tool: <https://www.osha.gov/etools/powerd-industrial-trucks/operating-forklift/pre-operation>.
- National Safety Council forklift injury stats/facts: <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/safety-topics/forklifts/>.

Powered Industrial Truck Safety Requires a Comprehensive Approach That Encompasses:

- Facility design
- Field-level risk assessment
- Application of the hierarchy of control
- Procurement
- Preventive maintenance
- Operator Training
- Pedestrian Training
- Pre-shift inspection
- Application of available safety technologies
- Highlight all risks during pre-shift safety briefings

If you would like assistance with any aspect of your powered industrial truck safety management, please contact your Signal Safety Manager.



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