

Forklift and lifting devices safety in industrial workplaces

Safe At Work Ontario
Enforcement > Compliance > Partnership >



The Ministry of Labour's proactive inspections for sector-specific hazards are designed to raise awareness and increase compliance with health and safety legislation, and reduce workplace injuries and disease.

Workplaces that operate lifting devices, including forklifts and personnel lifts, may expose workers to potentially serious physical hazards. Throughout February 2010, Ministry of Labour health and safety inspectors will visit workplaces across Ontario to check for hazards involving these devices.

Compliance: priority areas

Inspectors will take enforcement action as appropriate for any contraventions found under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and its regulations. They will pay particular attention to:

Lifting device inspection and maintenance

Inspectors will check to ensure employers are:

- Maintaining lifting equipment in good condition to prevent mechanical or operational failures. Employers must review preventive maintenance and inspection reports and follow manufacturers' instructions for recommended maintenance schedules and practices.
- Examining lifting devices to determine their load capacity. Employers must have these examinations conducted in accordance with the regulations, for example, before using a lifting device for the first time.
- Ensuring a lifting device is constructed and equipped with suitable ropes, chains, slings and other fittings and maintained to ensure the safety of all workers. Inspectors will ask employers about the maintenance and suitability of the equipment in the workplace.

Operation of the lifting device by a competent person

Inspectors will check to ensure workers have the training, knowledge and experience to operate specific lifting devices and that forklift trainees are accompanied by a trained individual. They will also check that supervisors are competent to oversee workers' operation of these devices.

Inspectors will review training records and question workers and their supervisors on their familiarity with the equipment being used in the workplace, procedures for working in the vicinity of lifting devices, and possible hazards.

Employers are responsible for keeping workers up-to-date on required training for operating lifting devices. We recommend that operator training be part of a larger comprehensive lifting device safety program, developed in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee or the health and safety representative that includes the following elements:

- Hazard identification
- Training (of both operators and those working near lifting devices)
- Supervision
- Operating procedures

- Maintenance and repair procedures
- Facility design
- Lift truck/device selection

Safe work environment

Inspectors will check that employers are taking the following specific reasonable precautions to protect workers who are working in the area of forklifts and lifting devices:

- Establishing pedestrian traffic policies and programs
- Conducting a comprehensive workplace assessment of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and
- Assessing offsite working environments for risks such as the potential for contacting power lines and the condition of work surfaces. In making such assessments, employers, contractors and constructors should consider safeguards such as:
 - Protective barriers, walkways or sidewalks to channel pedestrian movement
 - Competent signallers
 - Securing and immobilizing of unattended vehicles against accidental movement
 - Warning lights, signs and audible vehicular devices
 - Policies to restrict or separate pedestrian and/or vehicular movement in high travel routes
 - Signage such as surface markings to delineate either pedestrian or vehicle use
 - Speed limits for vehicles
 - Driver and pedestrian visibility
 - Awareness training for drivers, pedestrians and other on-property workers
 - Personal signalling devices (e.g., pedestrian hand-held horns), and
 - Adequate space allowances to allow for safe turning and/or backup, etc.

Follow-up: Many workplaces will be revisited by inspectors a year later to confirm ongoing compliance with any corrections ordered during the original visits.

Compliance information: Workplaces in the industrial sector are subject to regulation by provincial, municipal and federal governments. Further information is available from:

- **Ontario Ministry of Labour**
 - *Guideline for the Safe Operation and Maintenance of Powered Lift Trucks:*
<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/liftrucks/index.php>
 - *Safe At Work Ontario:* <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/index.php>
 - *A Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act:*
<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/ohsa/index.php>
- **Health and Safety Associations (HSAs)**
<http://www.wsib.on.ca/en/community/WSIB/ArticleDetail?vgnextoid=fa0ee35c819d7210VgnVCM100000449c710aRCRD>

Contact the Ministry of Labour

Ministry of Labour Health & Safety Contact Centre
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