



SAFETY ALERT

Pedestrians and Powered Industrial Trucks

We all agree that without proper training and designated pedestrian walkways, there can be only one outcome when pedestrians come in contact with powered industrial trucks; serious injury or even worse – fatality.

OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.178 (n) (6) states:

“The driver shall be required to look in the direction of, and keep a clear view of the path of travel.”

Operators must look around cab supports and load engaging apparatus completely before putting the machine in motion. The Operator must shift his head or body as necessary to inspect all the area in front of and behind the machine to make sure it is clear of pedestrians before the truck is moved. The Operator must never rely on ancillary devices such as back-up alarms, roto beacons, mirrors or cameras as a substitute for looking in the direction of and keeping a clear view of the path of travel.

BUT

This is only half of the equation. The other half is the Pedestrian. Ergonomics is the study of the interaction of man, machine, and the environment. A forklift work environment should be designed so the paths of the trucks never cross with the paths of pedestrians. Paths of forklifts and paths of pedestrians should be predetermined, marked, and enforced by strict work rules. Barriers can be installed to prevent unintentional crossings. Shortcuts can cause accidents. If the crossing of paths is unavoidable, control measures must be put in place. Operators should slow down and sound the horn if they must cross a pedestrian cross-walk. Some employers give the right-of-way to forklifts; others give the right-of-way to pedestrians. Make sure everyone knows the rules regardless of the workplace policy chosen. Pedestrians who must regularly work in the area should wear high visibility vests and hats and maintain eye contact with operators. Signs should be in place and all personnel should be required to acknowledge workplace rules in writing. Third party personnel, such as truck drivers, visitors, customers, etc., should be given rules to follow while in your facility; every step outside their truck must be pre-planned and they must not be allowed to wander. In-plant mirrors can be used to add vision to blind intersections for both operators and pedestrians.

While heavy equipment operators must follow all employer, OSHA and manufacturer guidelines for operating heavy industrial equipment, facility owners/operators must sum up the total equation by training pedestrians in the safe negotiation of dangers within the workplace.