

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCK SAFETY

While Powered Industrial Trucks (PIT's) are designed to make jobs easier, thousands of serious injuries occur each year due to improper operation. PIT's include forklifts, powered pallet jacks, order pickers, and other specialized industrial trucks powered by electric motors or internal combustion engines. Operating a PIT is not the same as driving a personal car or truck. PIT's must never be used unless the operator is trained and authorized. The following are some basic safety rules for PIT's.

Before Starting Work:

- Perform and document a pre-use inspection of the PIT.
- Evaluate the intended load and the center of gravity. Ensure that the load is secure, and properly stacked and balanced. If banding or wrapping is needed, apply in advance.
- Verify the rated capacity of the PIT from the nameplate and ensure that it has the capacity to handle the intended load. If there are any uncertainties about the intended load and lift, consult with your supervisor/manager or other competent person. Do not use any PIT unless you are trained and capable.
- Properly space the forks on forklifts.
- Review the work area and planned travel path for any obstructions. If any are present, clear them or develop a plan for working safely around them. A spotter or other observer should be used for tight quarters or when personnel are in the area.
- Evaluate the work area and travel path for any hazards. Don a hard hat in work areas where overhead obstructions and/or falling objects could pose a hazard.
- Put on the seat belt and test it before starting the PIT.
- Recognize the hazards of carbon monoxide gas and other emissions from all internal combustion powered PIT's (e.g., gasoline, LP gas or diesel fueled units). Ensure adequacy of general ventilation or open doors or windows to outdoors.
- Understand and follow fueling and charging safety procedures.

While Working:

- Passengers are never allowed on a PIT.
- Slowly drive into the load as far as possible.
- Tilt the load back slightly before lifting.
- Never leave the load in a raised position for travel; instead lower the load to within 4 to 6 inches above the floor.
- Do not allow anyone to walk under a load.
- Keeps hands and legs inside the vehicle compartment while traveling.
- Drive in reverse if your forward vision is obstructed.
- Look in the direction of travel, and make all starts and stops gradually.
- Drive slowly (5 mph or less inside buildings, 15 mph or less outside).
- Pedestrians have the right of way.
- When approaching corners, aisles, or other areas with obstructed views, slow down and sound horn.

While Working: (cont'd)

- Do not lift or lower a load while traveling.
- Go down an incline in reverse and up an incline forward.
- Slow down prior to going around curves or corners. Going too fast can cause a shift of the center of gravity of the vehicle and result in it overturning.
- Beware of overhead obstacles such as lights, doorways, and pipes,
- When unloading a truck/trailer, make sure vehicle restraint is in place and/or the wheels are chocked to prevent movement. Be sure that bridge plates are properly placed and secured. Inspect the underside of the vehicle for deterioration of structural members. If suspect, notify your unit supervisor or manager immediately and do not proceed.

When Finished Working:

- Set parking brake.
- Lower the forks and tilt forward so that the fork tips touch the ground.
- Block/chock wheels when on an incline.
 - a. Turn off the fuel tank (when applicable)
 - b. Remove and secure the keys or ensure the forklift is secured from unauthorized users.
- Perform and document a pre-use inspection of the PIT.
- Address any deficiencies or safety problems, or remove the PIT from service until so repaired. Notify the unit supervisor or manager.