

TOOLBOX TALK THREE

Belt Up

The three main causes of forklift deaths and serious injuries are:

- ✚ People being hit by a forklift
- ✚ People or drivers being hit by the load a forklift is carrying or lifting
- ✚ Drivers being crushed in a tip-over.

When it comes to working safely around forklifts, everyone is responsible for the health and safety of workers, contractors, volunteers, and any visitors to site.

RPR Trades have developed three toolbox talks to help you stay safe in the workplace.

Fact

Normal human instinct is to jump free from a forklift in the event of a tip-over; however, in many instances, operators have been crushed and killed by the overhead guard of a sit-down counterbalance forklift. A seat belt is designed to prevent the operator from jumping or falling out in the event of a collision or tip-over.

Case Study

A forklift operator was asked to load a truck on the other side of the yard, approximately 200 metres away. The yard surface consisted of gravel and was uneven.

The forklift was loaded with a pallet stacked high with heavy boxes. The driver began to travel in a forward direction and much faster than walking pace.

Because his vision was obscured by the boxes, the operator raised the load high enough to be able to see under the pallet.

While travelling, the operator came to a slight bend and did not slow down. The left front wheel dropped into a pothole and the forklift began to tip sideways.

The operator panicked and, because he was not wearing a seatbelt, tried to jump clear of the overturning forklift. As he jumped, the overhead guard came down on him suddenly and trapped him under the forklift. The driver sustained fatal injuries.

Ask yourself, WHAT could have been done differently?

Here are a few possible Answers to prevent injury:

- Worn a seat belt
- Lowered the load as low as possible (Raising the load made it very top heavy)
- Slowed down at the bend
- Repaired the yard surface
- Moved the truck closer to where the load is being moved
- Driven in reverse (The load was obscuring his view when travelling in a forward direction)
- Used a spotter at a safe distance to guide him
- Driven at walking pace
- Checked his route to look for any hazards or obstacles such as potholes and uneven surfaces
- Instead of jumping, should have stayed seated, held tight, braced feet, leaned away.

Summary

It's important to remember that working safely in and around forklifts is everyone's responsibility.

ASK Yourself: Is there anything that we could be doing better in our workplace in relation to avoiding a forklift tip-over and wearing a seatbelt at all times? If there is, speak to your RPR Trades Consultant / Safety / or your Supervisor.

CONTACTS

Phone: 1300 311 777 or call your local Consultant
Email: safety@rprtrades.com or e-mail your local Consultant

**LIKE IN A CAR,
WEARING A SEAT BELT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE IN A TIP-OVER OR COLLISION.**

