



# How to Safely Operate a Forklift



## Safety Checklist



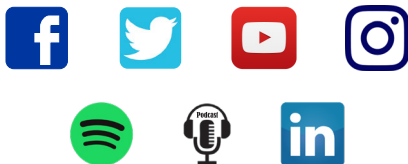
**Josh Dobson**  
*Commissioner of Labor*

### Agricultural Safety and Health Bureau

1101 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1101

**1-800-625-2267**  
**[www.labor.nc.gov](http://www.labor.nc.gov)**

Follow NCDOL on:



Stay in touch with today's workplace issues.

Sign up to receive a free subscription to the *Labor Ledger* at  
**[www.labor.nc.gov/news/labor-ledger](http://www.labor.nc.gov/news/labor-ledger)**

*All materials, photographs, graphics and illustrations created by the N.C. Department of Labor may be used for educational and training purposes as long as reference to NCDOL is provided. Any use of materials for commercial purposes is hereby prohibited.*

**Printed 9/07**

250 copies of this public document were printed at a cost of \$140, or \$.56 per copy.



**Josh Dobson**  
*Commissioner of Labor*

**1-800-625-2267**  
**[www.labor.nc.gov](http://www.labor.nc.gov)**





## How to Safely

### Operate a Forklift

- Be especially careful when turning. The forklift is less stable during turns.
- The load should be leveled and should not be raised. It should be no more than 2 inches from the ground.
- Be careful around other people. You should always be alert to people walking near the forklift. The pedestrian always has the right of way.
- Always wear your seatbelt. If an accident occurs, the seatbelt will help protect you.
- Operating a forklift is not like driving a car. A forklift is equipment designed for work. Drive slowly, and if your visibility is obstructed by the load, drive in reverse.
- Operate the forklift in a well-ventilated area. If you operate without proper ventilation, you risk carbon monoxide poisoning, a potentially fatal illness. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, dizziness, light-headedness and nausea. If you suspect someone is suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, call for medical help immediately!
- Be very careful on dangerous surfaces, such as surfaces with loose objects, uneven surfaces, or surfaces that are wet, greasy or icy.

- Never carry another person in the forklift. There is only one seatbelt and one seat. Do not allow anyone to be lifted on the blades of the forklift or on a pallet. If you plan to lift someone with the forklift, special authorized equipment must be used and specific safety rules must be followed.
- Complete a full inspection daily.
- If there is a problem, fix it before using the forklift.

### Safety Checklist

#### Before starting the forklift, you should check:

- ☒ The forks
- ☒ The mast
- ☒ The tires
- ☒ The overhead guard
- ☒ The safety belt
- ☒ The hydraulic system
- ☒ The oil level

#### After starting the forklift, you should check:

- ☒ The brakes
- ☒ The lights
- ☒ The signals
- ☒ The horn
- ☒ The gauges
- ☒ The steering
- ☒ The control levers

*For more information regarding forklift safety, contact the Agricultural Safety and Health Bureau at 1-800-625-2267 or 919-707-7820.*