

Brisk Workplace Health & Safety Update



Focus on safety—top five tips

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Tip 1: operating a forklift

A forklift is considered a 'High Risk Lift' and it is imperative to operate it safely. If you follow the key tips below, you are off to a good start.

Safe operating tips:


- Seatbelts must be worn and speed limits obeyed.
- Follow the road rules i.e. no cutting of corners, drive on the correct side of road etc.
- Avoid turning when negotiating grades, ramps and inclines.
- Slow down and sound the horn when approaching an intersection or corner.
- When getting off a forklift, ensure the brake is set, forks are lowered and controls are neutralised.
- Raising people on forks or pallets is a prohibited work practice.
- In the event of a side or forward tip-over, operators should:
 - stay in the cabin
 - hold on firmly
 - stay with the forklift, leaning in the opposite direction of the overturn
 - DO NOT jump.
- A properly adjusted seatbelt will keep you safely in the cabin during an overturn.
- Complete pre-operation safety checks.

Tip 2: loading and unloading trucks

Does your company have a loading and unloading policy? If you answered 'no' then your business could be at risk of an 'Improvement Notice' or a hefty fine. If you load or unload from trucks (whether from the ground or a loading dock) you need to have a clear procedure in place that must be followed by all parties. Examples include:

- Provide safe access and egress to trucks:
 - raised platforms: edges should be clearly marked, with rails or raised stop edges to prevent forklifts or trolley rolling over the edge
 - ground loading: ensure non-essential personnel are removed from the loading area, and clearly outline the exclusion zones, working areas or safety zones for drivers i.e. erect barriers.
- Remove the possibility of a truck moving during loading or unloading by:
 - hand in keys, keys handed back when paperwork lodged
 - ensuring trucks are parked safely with the brake firmly applied and in gear and wheels chocked.

Tip 3: designated walkways

Briskmark's 'Safety Update issue 8' focussed on 'Slips, Trips & Falls'. Designated walkways are areas businesses often ignore —well ignore no more. Here are five tips to keep your employees, buyers and visitors safe: 

1. maintain good housekeeping practices: ensure all walkways are clear of obstructions
2. reduce wet or slippery surfaces: clean up any spilt produce and/or water
3. avoid creating obstacles in aisles and walkways: no pallets / pallet jacks or produce stored in walkways
4. wear proper shoes: if traversing the many walkways ensure you have appropriate footwear— there are no such things as 'safety thongs'
5. control individual behaviour: ensure all staff are aware that walkways are to be left clear.

Note: you could be held partially responsible for injuries occurring in common or shared areas if your property and/or belongings were the cause of an incident and/or accident.

Tip 4: pedestrian safety (clear separation)

Pedestrian safety is a major focus of the Work Health and Safety Regulations. A number of accidents occur in workplaces where people work with or interface with vehicles (trucks, cars and forklifts) and as a result, you need to have your own internal Traffic Management Plan in place.

A Traffic Management Plan should include:

- safety provisions for both vehicles and pedestrians in the workplace
- one-way traffic policy— this is particularly important for larger warehouses as a one-way policy for vehicles will help reduce the risk of collision and excessive reversing
- pedestrian exclusion zones or separate walkways for pedestrian traffic where 'High Risk Lift' vehicles operate and install pedestrian barriers or identify 'NO GO' zones for plant or equipment
- adequate signage and where possible vision panels in pedestrian access doors.

Tip 5: personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE can be the last line of defence, but still can help protect staff. Appropriate PPE includes:

- hi-visibility vests or clothing for both day and night work
- safety shoes with toe protection for workers who use forklifts and move pallets
- enclosed footwear for office staff who are not required to use forklifts or move pallets.