

# Fork lift safety in MRFs

## 10 tips for safe operation



### 1. Ensure that there is clear segregation between pedestrians and forklifts

Pedestrian walkways and restricted areas should be established. More importantly, employees must be made familiar with the particular areas in which they are permitted to operate to ensure these are adhered to. All employees on site should be briefed on the dangers of working in close proximity to fork lift trucks.

### 2. Be observant of other plant (fixed and mobile) operating within the working area

MRFs often have multiple equipment types operating in different ways in the same space. To limit the chance of incidents, ensure appropriate visual aids/cameras are present and in good working order, and that all staff are trained to use the correct observational techniques.

### 3. Be careful when handling non banded products

Non-banded products such as tyres may present a hazard due to their varying condition and size. Their load centres have the potential to shift if they move during transportation; to limit the risk, make sure the load is secure before moving off and drive at a speed appropriate to the ground conditions and the load. Never carry a load that obscures your vision.

### 4. Handle un-palletised products with caution

Un-palletised products, such as drums and baled waste, could also present risks with regards to condition, size and load centre. Drummed waste should be handled with care to avoid punctures. When dealing with baled waste, operators should be aware of the material contained within the bales to aid them in estimating load weights etc.

### 5. Careful stacking

Non-banded and un-palletised products should not be stacked too high as their uneven weight distribution can cause them to become unbalanced far easier than palletised loads.



**Office and training centre locations:**

Chesterfield - 01246 555222 | Bromsgrove - 01527 570470 | Livingston - 01506 464664

[info@mentortraining.co.uk](mailto:info@mentortraining.co.uk)

[www.mentortraining.co.uk](http://www.mentortraining.co.uk)

## 6. Use suitable attachments

Many sites have fork lifts which carry out a multitude of operations using various attachments. Always use the correct attachment for the task required e.g. rotating forks for tipping bins, bale clamps when handling baled products, and standard forks for palletised loads.

## 7. Take extra care when operating indoors with little natural light

MRFs are often large structures with little natural light available. If switching between operating indoors and outdoors, be aware that your eyes may take time to adjust. 80% of FLT accidents occur due to visibility issues; take extra care.

## 8. Account for the ground conditions

Always adopt a safe travel position, accounting for the terrain; this should ensure that your forks avoid scraping the floor. If the ground is wet/greasy, don't over-rev the engine as this may cause wheel spin. You should always endeavour to move any dangerous debris out of the way of moving vehicles, but in this type of environment it is often impossible to remove all waste from the floor. Take care, driving slowly and carefully over it as you would over any uneven surface. Pre and post-operational checks are vital to ensure no plastic strapping/waste is trapped around wheels etc. Report any problems to your supervisor.

## 9. Adhere to speed/directional restrictions on site

Most sites that use fork lifts have speed restrictions in place. It is especially important that these are adhered to on busy waste sites due to the high risk nature of the environment. Many MRFs operate a one-way system to facilitate the flow of traffic on site; ensure you follow this to limit the risk of collisions between the various vehicles operating simultaneously in the MRF.

## 10. Follow the correct procedure for loading vehicles

Ensure that operators are familiar with the safe methods of loading/unloading vehicles (curtain-sided lorries, for example) including operating on access ramps, if required.

For further guidance on the safe operation of fork lifts on waste sites or at recycling facilities, please call Mentor on 01246 555222.



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