

Employer responsibilities for lift truck safety

As an employer, you're responsible for the health and safety of your workers. This information sheet describes your responsibilities for protecting workers who operate lift trucks (including forklifts) or work around them.

Your responsibilities include the following:

- Identify hazards and assess risks.
- Make sure your workers have the necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision to work safely.
- Provide suitable lift trucks for the work tasks, and make sure they are properly maintained.

Identifying hazards and assessing risks

Hazard identification and risk assessment don't have to be complicated. This section describes some things to look for when identifying hazards and assessing the risks for workers who operate or work around lift trucks.

Identify potential hazards

Consider the work tasks, the types of equipment used, and the work environment. Here are some examples of potential hazards:

- Blind spots
- Uneven or slippery surfaces, such as floors, ramps, or dock plates
- Loading docks
- Falling objects
- Overhead obstructions
- Raised forks
- Overloading
- Multiple types of equipment or vehicles operating in the same workspace

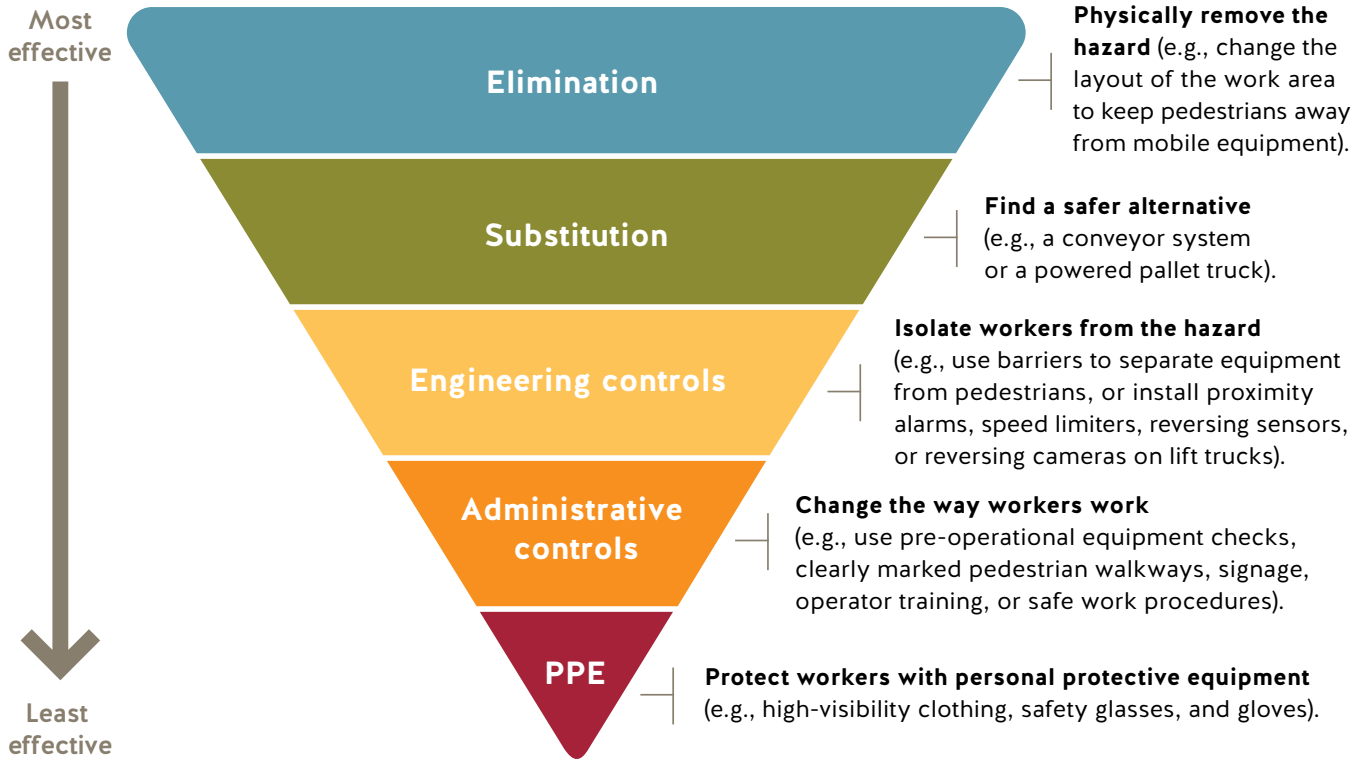


Assess the risks

When assessing risks, consider how likely an incident is and how serious it would be. For example, if pedestrians frequently use the same workspace as lift trucks, the likelihood and seriousness may be high, so you would identify the hazard as high risk.

The hierarchy of controls described on the next page is a useful tool for determining appropriate controls to manage risks. In the example above, you could eliminate the hazard by removing pedestrian traffic from the workspace. If that solution isn't practicable, you could install engineering controls such as barriers.

Hierarchy of controls



Document your risk assessment

Write down existing and potential hazards, the risks for each of them, and your risk controls. These records can help your workers understand the hazards related to their work.

Reassess the hazards if there are any changes in the workplace

If you have any changes to equipment, workers, workloads, or the work environment, including layout, reassess the hazards and update your documents as necessary.

For example, increasing the height of a storage system could introduce new hazards. These might include falling objects or the potential for making contact with overhead structures. You may need to change the type of equipment used and the flow of traffic.

Hierarchy of controls

Whenever possible, eliminate the hazard or substitute a safer alternative. If those options aren't practicable, use engineering controls. If that isn't practicable, then consider administrative controls. Only consider personal protective equipment as a last resort, or use it in combination with other controls to minimize risk.

Manager, supervisor, and worker responsibilities

Make sure managers, supervisors, and workers understand their responsibilities related to lift trucks.

Providing education, training, and supervision

Ensure that your lift truck operators are competent and have the training they need.

Lift truck operators must be trained in the requirements of CSA Standard B335-15, Safety Standard for Lift Trucks.

Communicate with your workers about the hazards of operating a lift truck in your workplace. Consider the following:

- Hazards associated with the loads
- Design of the workplace
- Workplace storage systems
- Environmental conditions, such as heating and ventilation systems or overhead structures or power lines

Make sure your workers understand the risk controls they need to follow to protect themselves and others from the potential hazards.

Selecting lift trucks

When selecting a lift truck, make sure its carrying capacity, reach capabilities, and features are suitable for the following:

- Loads to be carried
- Terrain or surface
- Atmospheric conditions (e.g., work areas that may have explosive levels of flammable gases, combustible dust, or vapours)
- Design of the workplace (e.g., indoor versus outdoor, type of floor, or type of storage system)

Make sure your lift trucks have warning devices and lights that are appropriate for your work environment.

Maintaining equipment

You're required to have a formal occupational health and safety program if you:

- Employ 20 or more workers and have at least one workplace where there is moderate or high risk of injury
- Have a workforce of more than 50 workers

This means you must have written instructions that describe when and how equipment inspections will occur. Consider the type of work being done, the environmental conditions, and manufacturer guidance.

Small businesses or employers with fewer than 20 workers still need a health and safety program, but it can be simple and less formal.

You must keep maintenance records for any service, repair, or modification that affects the safe performance of the equipment.

Only qualified workers should perform maintenance activities. Ask mobile equipment service technicians, including external providers, about their education, training, and experience.

ANSI standard for lift trucks

The design, fabrication, use, inspection, and maintenance of powered lift trucks must meet the requirements of ANSI Standard ANSI/ITSDF B56.1-2009, Safety Standard for Low Lift and High Lift Trucks.

Operating lift trucks

Make sure your workers follow all the applicable regulations and guidelines when using lift trucks. These include the following requirements:

- Maintain and use operator restraint systems, including seat belts.
- Inspect lift trucks before operating them on each shift and then as necessary to ensure safe operation.
- Keep lift trucks free of materials and tools that could interfere with safe operation.
- Ensure loads are secured for transport.

Facility layout and design

As an employer, you're also responsible for the safe layout and design of your workplace. Consider the following questions:

- Do side clearances in aisles, loading docks, and doorways allow for the safe operation of lift trucks?
- Can storage racks safely support stored items? Are they designed and constructed according to good engineering practices? Are they used as specified by the manufacturer or a professional engineer?

- Is your workplace clear and free of potential hazards?
- Does your workplace have adequate lighting and ventilation? If this isn't possible, is the equipment adequately equipped? Does it meet any applicable requirements?

Note: When operating internal combustion engines indoors, see sections [5.57](#) and [5.72 to 5.75](#) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

- Are pedestrians and workers near lift truck operations kept safe? For example, does the workplace have barriers, designated walkways, or pedestrian right-of-way policies?
- Are workers who are around lift trucks wearing high-visibility clothing?
- Are there controls for outdoor yards and construction sites that have additional hazards (e.g., uneven surfaces, overhead obstructions, or inclement weather conditions)?