



Keep Employees and Customers Safe at Work around Forklifts and Large Equipment

Lumberyards present unique challenges for forklift operators which are not found in many other industries. Employees and customers are often located in the same areas where trucks and large vehicles are operating, creating a potential of increased risk for the driver and people on the ground. In fact, each year almost 100 people are killed, and over 20,000 are injured in forklift-related accidents.¹

Customers are often focused on their own personal task at hand, and may not have any training about the dangers of being close to several tons of mobile machinery which can have limited, restricted, or obstructed vision. A National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) summary of over 1,000 forklift accident fatalities reveals that 20% involved a person on foot, and 16% of victims were crushed by a lift.²

Here are a few examples of some accidents involving equipment and personnel, and how easily accidents can occur:

- A customer accidentally steps into the path of an oncoming forklift while pulling out boards and is struck by the machine.
- An employee is chatting with a forklift operator who accidentally runs over his colleague's foot.
- A load of trusses on a flatbed trailer is bumped into by other trusses being unloaded. The bumped trusses fall onto a bystander who was trying to help guide the lift.

To help protect against serious or even fatal accidents, Acadia Insurance offers the following safety tips for consideration by lumberyards and their forklift and equipment operators:

1. Watch where you're going, and always face the direction of travel. Pedestrians and other vehicles often use the same roadway that you do, so sound your horn at intersections and blind spots.
2. Watch for people in your work area. They may not watch for you, even if you have warning lights or alarms. If you think they may not see you, do not move until you make eye contact.
3. If your view is blocked because of the load, traveling backwards may be an option. If you must move forward, make sure that people are out-of-the-way, and move your lift truck slowly. Use a spotter to help you. If you can't see the spotter or a clear path of travel, don't move the truck.
4. Loading and unloading can be especially difficult, and may require additional concentration on your job. Before you start, make sure the truck driver, and other personnel out of the way.
5. Watch for pedestrians around you. Don't let anyone walk under your raised forks or load. Keep people off of your truck -- not on the forks, not on the load, not on the truck -- off and away completely.

¹ BLS 1997, 1998. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2001-109/default.html#2>

² <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2001-109/default.html#2>

6. If someone is required to hold or position the load while you are moving, there is likely something wrong. If you can't handle the load alone, consider changing the load or the equipment.

For additional information about Acadia Insurance and its loss control programs, contact your local Acadia insurance agent.

About Acadia Insurance:

Acadia Insurance is a regional company offering commercial and specialty property casualty insurance coverages through independent insurance agents with local offices in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. Rated A+ (Superior) by A.M. Best, Acadia Insurance is a subsidiary of W. R. Berkley Corporation (NYSE: WRB), one of the nation's premier commercial lines property casualty insurance providers, and one of the 50 largest diversified financial companies in the United States. Please visit www.acadiainsurance.com.

Acadia is pleased to share this material for the benefit of its customers. Please note, however, that nothing herein should be construed as either legal advice or the provision of professional consulting services. This material is for informational purposes only, and while reasonable care has been utilized in compiling this information, no warranty or representation is made as to accuracy or completeness. Recipients of this material must utilize their own individual professional judgment in implementing sound risk management practices and procedures.