August 2023

# IN TOUCH

EHS Newsletter

SAFETECH
Environment
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Safety

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## FORKLIFT SAFETY

The forklift is one of the most commonly used pieces of equipment on the worksite. However, there is risk involved in operating any industrial machine - it is essential to ensure that staff are trained on proper forklift safety measures.

1. Since many accidents are due to poor forklift safety training, it is recommended that only those who are trained and licensed be responsible for operating a forklift.
2. Forklift operators should be dressed with the appropriate safety equipment, including safety shoes, hard-hats and a high-visibility jacket. Make sure to tuck away loose clothing to prevent it from getting caught on the forklift.
3. There are many different types and classifications of forklift, each with its own structure, weight limit, traveling speed, turning radius and usage - it is important to know the equipment in order to follow the best safety practices.
4. Forklifts should be thoroughly inspected before every use. Daily checks with the shift supervisor are recommended to identify and log any problems or defects. Any equipment that requires repair should not be operated.

**Here are some best practices to help you observe your operating environment and protect yourself and the other individuals on the worksite:**

**Maintain 360 Degree Visibility**
Keep forks low to the ground to provide clear forward visibility. If the load restricts visibility, operate the equipment in reverse. When positioning a load on a rack, always ensure a good view is maintained.

**Implement a Floor Marking System**
A floor marking system can help increase worker safety. Place wayfinders and signs throughout the site to keep pedestrians away from forklift paths, lead forklifts along safe routes, and improve the overall flow of traffic.

**Maintain Equipment Capacity**
Avoid hauling weight that exceeds the counterweight of the forklift. Because of the way forklifts are designed, overloading can cause the rear wheels to rise off the ground and result in the forklift falling over. This can cause injury to personnel and damage to the equipment and materials.

**Never Carry Extra People**
Do not allow other workers to ride on the equipment unless a second seat is fitted onto the forklift. Forklifts are designed to carry loads and not to lift people - if you need to lift a person, use only a secure work platform and a forklift safety cage.

**Ensure Loads are Stable and Secure**
Check loads for balance when placing them on the loading dock. While moving, loads should be tilted backward and forks kept as low as possible, to increase the stability of the equipment, especially when navigating on ramps. Use ropes or bindings to secure stacks and heavy loads.

**Operate the Forklift at the Appropriate Speed**
Drive forklifts within the designated speed limit. It is important to not stop, turn, change direction suddenly, or make sharp turns - these actions can cause the forklift to tip over.

**Maintain Safe Operating Distance**
Be mindful of the surrounding equipment on the worksite and avoid operating a forklift in close proximity to other machinery unless absolutely necessary. Maintain a safe distance to allow room to stop safely and avoid other machines that are moving in an unpredictable manner.

**Pedestrian Safety**
Since almost 80% of forklift accidents involve pedestrians, it is vital to keep pedestrian safety in mind when operating forklifts. The best strategy is to train both operators and pedestrians on proper safety procedures.

**Operating a forklift is dangerous and extreme alertness is necessary. Any use of alcohol or drugs should be avoided before operating a forklift - this includes any opioid pain killers, antihistamines that cause drowsiness, sedatives, Ritalin or any other legal drug that alters your judgment.**

**CONTACT US TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES FOR YOUR BUSINESS:**

- EHS Risk Assessments
- Occupational Hygiene Surveys
- Ergonomics Surveys
- EHS Management System Development and Implementation
- Environmental Monitoring
- Identification of EHS Legal Requirements and Compliance Audits
- Construction EHS Services
- Construction H&S Files
- Internal Auditor Training
- General EHS Training

Department of Employment and Labour Approved Inspection Authority (OH0049-CI-09)

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## USING COMPRESSED AIR FOR BREATHING APPARATUS

Compressed air can be used to supply clean breathing air to respiratory protective equipment (RPE) used in industrial and manufacturing processes, such as abrasive blasting and spray painting. There is an inherent risk, however, that the air supplied by compressors, powered by internal combustion engines, can be contaminated with harmful gases and substances

Carbon monoxide is the most toxic contaminant in compressed air. It may enter the breathing air system through the air intake or when air compressors, powered by an internal combustion engine, continue to operate when overheated. More specifically, oil lubricants in air compressors may break down at high temperatures and produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. The air intake must be placed away from engine exhaust or other sources of carbon monoxide.

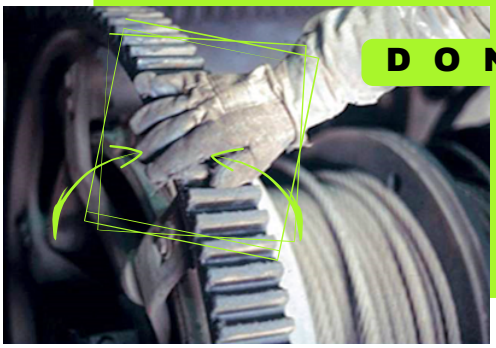
### Other Compressed Air Contaminants:

**Water / Water Vapor**
Air contains moisture which is drawn into the compressor and enters the air stream as a vapour. As compressed air flows through the system, it cools, causing the vapour to condense in the face piece or helmet. Moisture combines with oil and solid contaminants to form sludge, which can clog or damage system components. Water also causes rust in pipelines and can freeze in cold weather to block air flow. **Aspiration of water vapour may cause Pneumonia or Pulmonary Edema, which can be fatal.**

**Oil / Oil Mist**
Oil is a major contaminant in systems using lubricated compressors. Lubricating oil applied to cylinders causes small droplets to enter the air system as a mist. Oil mist can cause breathing discomfort, nausea and pneumonia and create unpleasant taste and odours.

**Solids**
Solids generally enter the system through the air intake. However, some materials may be introduced by the compressor itself. In non-lubricated compressors, teflon, carbon and other materials are used as lubricants. Frictional wear can cause particles from these materials to enter the air stream.

**Safetech can test your compressed air to determine if it is safe for breathing equipment and complies with SANS 277:2004. The contaminant limits are: water vapour (50mg/m3); oil (1mg/m3; carbon monoxide (5ppm); carbon dioxide (500ppm)**



## DON'T GET CAUGHT!

- Jewellery, especially neck chains or bracelets, should never be worn around moving equipment. There is not only the danger of being drawn into moving parts, but also of electrocution.
- Tucking long hair under a collar or cap is not safe as it can work free and become entangled in equipment. Wear a hair net or keep hair short.
- Report all moving parts that are exposed and pose a danger.
- Focus on the job and always be aware of the possibility of becoming entangled in moving machinery. Follow lockout/tagout procedures before performing any maintenance, adjustments or attempting to free jammed materials. Machine guards must always be replaced.
- Good housekeeping is very important. Avoid the danger of someone tripping over something that has been left on the floor and rushing headlong into disaster.
- Ensure that there is enough light so that people are aware of dangerous circumstances.
- Never reach or step across moving equipment.

Any machine part which can cause injury must be guarded. Machine guards help to eliminate personnel hazards created by points of operation, ingoing nip points, rotating parts and flying chips. Anyone working around machinery needs to be properly trained about the potential hazards and what to do if a safeguard is missing or damaged.

**Also read Schedule D of the General Machinery Regulations of the OHS Act.**