

# Forklift Safety Accident Prevention Alert

The Next Three Seconds Protects Your Life, Your Loved Ones, Your Livelihood®

## The N3L3 philosophy:

our approach to  
protecting workers  
from fatal and life-  
changing events.

*Eastern Alliance is here  
to help. To learn more  
about Eastern's N3L3  
program and access  
other safety resources,  
sign in and visit the  
Safety Tools on  
[www.easternalliance.com](http://www.easternalliance.com),  
or contact your  
Risk Management  
Consultant for assistance*

**1.855.533.3444**

Forklifts create a significant hazard in the workplace to both the forklift operator and pedestrians. Eastern Alliance Insurance Group has seen several significant forklift-related accidents, each one resulting in a life-changing injury.

### EVENT ONE:

A forklift was backing down a ramp. As the operator reached the end of the ramp, he began to turn the wheels. Just before the forklift reached the bottom of the ramp, a coworker attempted to approach the forklift to talk to the operator. The coworker approached the forklift from the same direction that the operator was turning and the forklift operator ran over his coworker. The resulting injuries were multiple fractures and a near amputation of the left arm.

### EVENT TWO:

A forklift was traveling forward down a ramp with a loaded super-sack. At the bottom of the ramp the operator raised the forks so the super-sack would not hit the ground. Once the operator raised the forks, the super-sack was in the operator's line of sight which required him to raise his forks even higher so he was able to see. The operator attempted to make a turn off the ramp resulting in the forklift tipping over and crushing the operator's leg and foot. The resulting injury was an amputation of the operator's leg from the knee down.



Image source: Wikimedia.org

### EVENT THREE:

A forklift operator was instructed to move a pallet of items from in front of a machine. The operator proceeded to the machine, picked up the pallet of materials, and began to back up the forklift. In the meantime, a coworker began a task which required him to be kneeling approximately twenty feet behind the forklift. As the forklift operator backed up, he looked over his right shoulder, but not over his left where his coworker was kneeling.

This information is proprietary and is intended to assist you in your safety efforts. It must not be assumed that every unsafe condition or procedure has been covered in this document, nor that every possible loss potential, and legal violation has been identified herein. This document is not a substitute for the establishment of risk management programs by your management.

# Forklift Safety Accident Prevention Alert

The Next Three Seconds Protects Your Life, Your Loved Ones, Your Livelihood®

## The N3L3 philosophy:

our approach to  
protecting workers  
from fatal and life-  
changing events.

*Eastern Alliance is here  
to help. To learn more  
about Eastern's N3L3  
program and access  
other safety resources,  
sign in and visit the  
Safety Tools on  
[www.easternalliance.com](http://www.easternalliance.com),  
or contact your  
Risk Management  
Consultant for assistance*

**1.855.533.3444**

The forklift ended up running over the coworker's right leg which was extending into the travel lane. Thinking that the forklift was on the coworker's leg, the operator pulled forward, inadvertently/unknowingly running over the coworker's leg again. The resulting injury was a crushed leg requiring multiple surgeries.

### *Lessons Learned:*

There were a variety of contributing factors in each of these events. Some of these may exist in your workplace and could result in a fatal or life-changing event. Below are prevention strategies that you can implement to prevent incidents such as these from occurring:

- Invest in forklift safety systems such as back up alarms, warning lights, traffic lights at intersections, proximity sensors that detect pedestrians in the area, etc.
- Observe operator work practices and implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) for forklift operations, such as backing down ramps, looking in the direction of travel, keeping forks low to the ground, keeping clear visuals over loads, etc.
- Evaluate forklift traffic patterns to determine best paths to reduce sharp turns, pedestrian traffic, dark areas, etc.
- Designate pedestrian and forklift aisle ways
- Discuss hazards of forklifts and pedestrians in the workplace on a regular basis
- Discuss communication methods and clearance distances for when pedestrians must approach operators
- Observe and document competency of operators. Retrain to competency, as required.
- Require and enforce the use of seat belts – no exceptions, ever!
- Implement a high-visibility clothing/vest program for pedestrians.

This information is proprietary and is intended to assist you in your safety efforts. It must not be assumed that every unsafe condition or procedure has been covered in this document, nor that every possible loss potential, and legal violation has been identified herein. This document is not a substitute for the establishment of risk management programs by your management.