



Image Source: Getty Images

Forklift tip-overs cause many workplace injuries. Follow the rules and best practices listed below to reduce fatal and life-changing events associated with tip-over accidents:

- Seat belts **MUST** be worn when operating a forklift.
- Understand that braking sharply, turning quickly and traveling at increased speeds increases the likelihood of a tip-over.
- Know the forklift's load/mast clearance when traveling through doorways or areas with overhead obstruction. Slow down and proceed with caution. Overhead obstructions could also include overhead cranes, hoists, roof trusses, trailer roofs, conveyors, lighting, etc.
- If the load is particularly long or wide, it can catch on objects and cause the center of gravity to move outside the stability triangle and cause a tip-over. Evaluate your path of travel prior to moving and determine if an alternate route is needed.
- Use a spotter positioned at a safe distance if there is concern that the load will hit anything.
- Know the weight limits of your equipment and never attempt to lift a load exceeding the load capacity. The data plate on the forklift will provide the unit's load capacity information.
- Never modify the forks or use different forks or attachments that are not approved by that unit's manufacturer.



Preventing Equipment Tip-Over

- Keep the mast tilted back while operating. Only tilt it forward when picking up or dropping off a load.
- Always keep the load facing uphill when operating on ramps.
- Always keep forks as low to the ground as possible and consistent with safe operations. The length of the load and the terrain you are driving on effects the distance to the ground.
- NEVER drive horizontally across a slope. Always drive up and down.
- Watch out for potholes, seams in concrete or other uneven surfaces which can cause the load on the forks to move the center of gravity outside of the stability triangle.
- Make sure the trailer nose is properly supported to carry the additional weight of the forklift.
- Always use dock locks or wheel chocks when loading or unloading trailers to minimize trailer creep.
- Use of glad hand locks on trailer airlines is the only way to ensure the trailer being loaded cannot be pulled away from the dock (this is a lockout/tagout procedure for the forklift operators to follow).
- Never attempt to carry an unstable load. Unstable loads can slide off the forks or shift enough to move the center of gravity outside the stability triangle. Consider restacking, shrink wrapping, strapping or banding the load to provide more stability.
- If your sit-down lift truck begins to tip over, DO NOT jump off. Hold on to the steering wheel, brace your feet and lean away from the impact. The seat belt and overhead guard are your best lines of defense.



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