



Use of forklift trucks at mine and quarry sites

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The primary purpose of this Safety Bulletin is to raise awareness regarding the safe use of forklift trucks among the mining and quarrying industry stakeholders. This document highlights the areas of concern and provides references to useful sources of information for controlling the risks within acceptable levels.

Analysis of findings from recent incident investigations and inspections involving forklift trucks indicates a lack of awareness and apparent disregard for key areas of operational safety. Among them are the following:

- Lack of regard for work environment and terrain limitations - natural, rough or ungraded road surfaces may not be suitable for most ordinary forklift trucks and may require rough terrain trucks designed for use in such terrain.
- Poor maintenance of machines (brakes, steering, tyres etc) and operating surfaces/roads.
- Failure to develop Standard Work Instructions/Standard Work Procedures for particular operation/tasks including maintenance.
- Lack of information/instruction, including specifications, limitations, operator protection devices, emergencies and plant inspections/tests.
- Use of untrained, poorly trained or incompetent operators leading to incident or accident caused by operator errors.

Published information available for guidance on acceptable practice

The following published materials are valuable resources in the application of risk controls:

- Australian Standard AS 2359.2-1985 - SAA Industrial Truck Code Part 2 - Operation
- Australian Standard AS 2359.1 -1995 - Powered Industrial Trucks, Part 1: General Requirements
- Forklift Trucks - Employers Guide November 1993 - Qld. Govt. Div. of Workplace Health and Safety
- Industrial Truck Operators Guide - Qld. Govt. Div. of Workplace Health and Safety
- National Guidelines for OHS Competency Standards - Load Shifting Equipment Forklift Truck
- Mining Industry Training Advisory Board (Mining ITAB) Training Packages and Assessment Guidelines

Operator protection devices



Forklift truck tip-over puts the operator at a life-threatening risk. Reasons for forklift truck tip-over includes overloading, incorrect load positioning, lifting loads to an excessive height, careless or sharp steering at speed, driving on steep slopes, excessive speed, and driving on unsuitable surfaces. Whilst it is important to direct our efforts towards preventing tip-over in the first place, the likely consequence of a tip-over may warrant the provision of operator protection devices to manage the risks to an acceptable level. The recognition of this fact is reflected in the specified requirements for operator restraints and protection in the Australian Standards mentioned earlier. These requirements include:

- a seat belt assembly with adequate attaching structures
- over-head guard (designed to protect the operator from falling objects)
- restraint system to reduce the risk of entrapment of operator's head or torso in the event of a tip-over
- advisory notice with instructions to follow in the event of a tip-over (a stick-on pictorial placard in the cabin as per example given in AS2359.1-1995 is commonly used).

When retro-fitting seat belt assemblies on early model trucks (to incorporate seat belts and restraint systems), it is important to ensure the integrity of seat frames, mounting points, engine cowl retainers and hinges.

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