

# **SafetyToolboxTalks**

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## **Forklifts Versus Pedestrians**

As an operator of a powered industrial truck, you must safeguard other employees at all times. This rule is no different than what is required of you as a safe driver when you are operating your own car. Pedestrians, whether they are walking down the aisle of a plant or walking down a city street, are no match against moving steel.

As a matter of fact, as pedestrians, your fellow employees are probably much more aware of the dangers involved in being hit by a car as it drives past them than they are aware of the dangers involved in being hit or crushed by a powered industrial truck as it goes by them at work. If you are driving your truck down a narrow aisle and there is a pedestrian in the aisle who steps to the side to let you by, are you absolutely positive that there is enough clearance for you to get by? Remember, you are responsible for safety.

Let's not forget what I said at the very beginning of this talk. As an operator of a powered industrial truck, you must safeguard other employees at all times. That responsibility is part of your job.

During a recent year 950 employees in the state of Michigan were injured because they were struck by powered industrial vehicles.

So let's go over a few safety rules that can help you do your job a little better.

Don't let friends drive your truck so they can see what it feels like. You are letting them put themselves and other workers in danger if you do.

Another factor in the safety of pedestrians is speed. Travel at a safe speed, suitable to the surroundings and the type of load you are carrying. Don't ever become a race driver down aisles or elsewhere. Take your time and drive safely.

If the floors you are driving across are wet or slippery, drive at a slow speed. This is the same as on a highway in your own car. Conditions determine the speed you should go.

Slow down and sound your warning device at cross aisles and other locations where your vision is obstructed by fixed objects. Let others know you are coming. In level areas, travel with load engaging means elevated only enough to clear obstacles on the floor or roadway.

When you are moving loads which block your forward visibility, drive the truck with the load trailing. If you can't see where you're going, you're headed for an accident.

Watch for pedestrians sound your horn to warn them that you are approaching. But don't sneak up and then scare them. They may suddenly move into your path.

Look behind you before backing up. Something may be there now that wasn't there a few minutes before.

Treat blind corners and doorways as "Stop Streets." Running these stop signs is just as much a hazard as doing it on a city street.

Don't drive your truck up to anyone who is standing in front of a bench or other fixed object. If your brakes fail, a serious accident could occur.

Don't allow anyone to stand or pass under the elevated portion of your truck, whether it is loaded or empty. If they don't listen, tell your supervisor.

And of course, stunt driving and horseplay are never permitted. This is a place to work not a playground.

If we will all follow these safety rules we should be able to avoid accidents and protect fellow employees. The responsibility for safety belongs to everyone. By being a safe powered industrial truck driver you are doing your part to make this a safe place to work.

