FORKLIFT SAFETY

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APPROVAL:

ERIC H. JENSEN  ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY  11-21-17
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1 POLICY

All forklifts or powered industrial trucks shall be operated and maintained in accordance with this policy. Only individuals trained and which maintain a current MA DOT Class 1 D hoisting license are permitted to operate a forklift.

2 AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 Environmental Health and Safety Manager (EHS) is responsible for:

- Reviewing the Forklift Safety program to assure compliance;
- Reviewing and updating the training program on an annual basis;
- Coordinating and providing training for applicable personnel; and
- Maintaining training records of all operators.

2.2 Supervisors are responsible for:

- Ensuring employees attend required training and operate forklifts in a safe manner;
- Conducting practical exercises for employees;
- Ensuring all equipment is in proper working condition;
- Assuring operators perform appropriate pre-operation safety inspections; and
- Scheduling maintenance by outside contractors.

2.3 Employees are responsible for:

- Participating in annual forklift safety training;
- Wearing personal protection equipment (PPE) when operating forklifts; and
- Responsible for complying with this policy.
3 FORKLIFT OPERATION

General requirements for forklift operations are as follows:

- Trucks shall not be driven up to anyone standing in front of a bench or other fixed object.
- No person shall be allowed to stand or pass under the elevated portion of any truck, whether loaded or empty.
- Unauthorized personnel shall not be permitted to ride on powered industrial trucks.
- The employer shall prohibit arms or legs from being placed between the uprights of the mast or outside the running lines of the truck.
- When a powered industrial truck is left unattended, load engaging means shall be fully lowered, controls shall be neutralized, power shall be shut off, and brakes set. Wheels shall be blocked if the truck is parked on an incline.
- A powered industrial truck is unattended when the operator is 25 ft. or more away from the vehicle which remains in his view, or whenever the operator leaves the vehicle and it is not in his view.
- When the operator of an industrial truck is dismounted and within 25 ft. of the truck still in his view, the load engaging means shall be fully lowered, controls neutralized, and the brakes set to prevent movement.
- A safe distance shall be maintained from the edge of ramps or platforms while on any elevated dock, or platform or freight car. Trucks shall not be used for opening or closing freight doors.
- Brakes shall be set and wheel blocks shall be in place to prevent movement of trucks, or trailers while loading or unloading. Fixed jacks may be necessary to support a semitrailer during loading or unloading when the trailer is not coupled to a tractor. The flooring of trucks and trailers shall be checked for breaks and weakness before they are driven onto.
- There shall be sufficient headroom under overhead installations, lights, pipes, sprinkler system, etc.
- An overhead guard shall be used as protection against falling objects. It should be noted that an overhead guard is intended to offer protection from the impact of small packages, boxes, bagged material, etc., representative of the job application, but not to withstand the impact of a falling capacity load.
- A load backrest extension shall be used whenever necessary to minimize the possibility of the load or part of it from falling rearward.
- Only approved industrial trucks shall be used in hazardous locations.
- Fire aisles, access to stairways, and fire equipment shall be kept clear.
4 FORKLIFT TRAVELING

General requirements for forklifts traveling are as follows:

- All traffic regulations shall be observed. A safe distance shall be maintained approximately three truck lengths from the truck ahead, and the truck shall be kept under control at all times.
- The right of way shall be yielded to ambulances, fire trucks, or other vehicles in emergency situations.
- Other trucks traveling in the same direction at intersections, blind spots, or other dangerous locations shall not be passed.
- The driver shall be required to slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles and other locations where vision is obstructed. If the load being carried obstructs forward view, the driver shall be required to travel with the load trailing.
- The driver shall be required to look in the direction of, and keep a clear view of the path of travel.
- Grades shall be ascended or descended slowly.
- When ascending or descending grades in excess of 10 percent, loaded trucks shall be driven with the load upgrade.
- On all grades the load and load engaging means shall be tilted back if applicable, and raised only as far as necessary to clear the road surface.
- Under all travel conditions the truck shall be operated at a speed that will permit it to be brought to a stop in a safe manner.
- Stunt driving and horseplay shall not be permitted.
- The driver shall be required to slow down for wet and slippery floors.
- Dockboard or bridgeplates, shall be properly secured before they are driven over. Dockboard or bridgeplates shall be driven over carefully and slowly and their rated capacity never exceeded.
- Running over loose objects on the roadway surface shall be avoided.
- While negotiating turns, speed shall be reduced to a safe level by means of turning the hand steering wheel in a smooth, sweeping motion. Except when maneuvering at a very low speed, the hand steering wheel shall be turned at a moderate, even rate.

5 FORKLIFT LOADING

General requirements for forklifts loading are as follows:
• Only stable or safely arranged loads shall be handled. Caution shall be exercised when handling off-center loads which cannot be centered.
• Only loads within the rated capacity of the truck shall be handled.
• The long or high (including multiple-tiered) loads which may affect capacity shall be adjusted.
• Trucks equipped with attachments shall be operated as partially loaded trucks when not handling a load.
• A load engaging means shall be placed under the load as far as possible; the mast shall be carefully tilted backward to stabilize the load.
• Extreme care shall be used when tilting the load forward or backward, particularly when high tiering. Tilting forward with load engaging means elevated shall be prohibited except to pick up a load. An elevated load shall not be tilted forward except when the load is in a deposit position over a rack or stack. When stacking or tiering, only enough backward tilt to stabilize the load shall be used. Trucks shall not be driven up to anyone standing in front of a bench or other fixed object.

6 FUEL HANDLING AND STORAGE

The handling and storage of liquefied petroleum gas fuel (propane) shall be in accordance with the Storage and Handling of Liquefied Petroleum Gases Code (NFPA 58). Propane tanks shall be stored in exterior locked cages.

The following procedures shall be followed:

• When refueling or recharging the batteries of a forklift, the operator shall ensure that the forklift is shut off and the parking brake is engaged;
• Refueling and recharging shall be completed in areas that are designated and well ventilated;
• Personal protective equipment (approved face shield, goggles, gloves) shall be worn during all refueling and battery recharging operations;
• Smoking shall be prohibited in refueling and recharging areas. Fuel vapors and gases, which can escape from the battery and fuel vents, are extremely flammable;
• Tools and other metallic objects shall be kept away from the top of uncovered batteries; and
• An ABC rated fire extinguisher shall be present in all refueling or recharging areas.
7  WORKPLACE HAZARDS

Many hazards exist in the workplace that are easily detectable if a quick survey of the area is conducted. These hazards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Overhead obstructions such as fire protection sprinkler piping, ventilation ducts, lighting fixtures, and power lines. If the load you are moving is carried too high or the forklift mast is raised too high, damage can occur to the overhead obstruction and possibly cause injury to the operator or people in the immediate area;
- Co-workers or pedestrians traveling to and from certain areas within the facility;
- Poor housekeeping such as debris left on the ground and wet surfaces;
- Poor condition of the driving surface such as uneven concrete, potholes, and cracks;
- Poor visibility around corners. The operator’s view from a forklift can be blocked or obstructed by the load. If there is not a clear view, drive in reverse or have a co-worker act as a “spotter” and provide direction;
- Operating a forklift in an area with poor ventilation can result in accumulated exhaust gases. This creates a hazard not only for the forklift operator, but also for others within the area or building. Environmental Health and Safety shall be contacted to determine air quality if concerns should arise;
- Operator eyeglasses may steam up when entering a warm atmosphere from a cold atmosphere (i.e. driving into a building from the outside); and
- Driving too fast for the conditions of the area. When operating a forklift, always remain alert and cautious.

It is imperative that the forklift operator note the existing and potential hazards and conditions that do, or could, exist in the work environment. Whenever a hazard is discovered which requires remediation such as housekeeping, poor surface condition, or poor ventilation, immediately notify a supervisor to ensure the proper procedures are followed to address the hazards.

8  SAFETY PRACTICES

When operating a forklift, always travel with the forks approximately four inches from the ground so the forks clear any uneven surfaces. Always survey the area ahead and to the sides during travel. Always travel in reverse or use a “spotter” when the carried load obstructs view.

Some factors that could cause the forklift to tip over:
- Overloads;
- Unstable loads;
- Load not centered on forks;
- Traveling with the load raised;
- Sudden stops and starts;
- Making sharp turns; and
- Traveling across a ramp or incline.

The following safety practices shall be adhered to at all times:

- Wear seat belts when operating the forklift;
- Keep all body parts inside the driver’s compartment;
- Drive at appropriate speeds;
- Do not carry passengers on the forklift;
- No person shall be permitted to stand or pass under elevated portions of any forklift, whether loaded or empty;
- All forklift operators working on platforms that are six feet above a lower level shall wear appropriate fall protection devices;
- When traveling behind other forklifts or vehicles, always maintain at least three vehicle lengths from vehicle ahead or behind, and maintain control of the forklift at all times;
- Slowly approach ramps and inclines straight, not at an angle;
- Never turn the forklift while on a ramp or incline;
- When parking a forklift and prior to dismounting or leaving the unit, shut off the power. The operator shall never leave a running forklift unattended;
- When the forklift is left unattended, the load shall be fully lowered, controls shall be neutralized, power shut off, brakes set, and wheels blocked if forklift is parked on an incline;
- Never park a forklift in front of fire protection equipment, emergency exits, or in a manner that would obstruct a person from exiting the area;
- If, at any time during operation, a forklift is found to be in need of repair, defective, or in any way unsafe, it shall be immediately removed from service. The department supervisor shall be notified so they can arrange for repairs; and
- Only loads within the rated capacity of the forklift shall be handled. Loads shall be stable or safely arranged before being handled.
9 LICENSING AND TRAINING

9.1 Initial Training

MBL employees designated to operate an MBL owned forklift shall be required to participate in and successfully complete a forklift training program offered through Environmental Health and Safety to ensure the operator is competent to operate a forklift safely. Upon completing training, employee must complete application for a MA Class 1, 1D Hoisting license which requires a DOT physical for submission. Environmental Health and Safety will provide information on location for obtaining the required physical to be paid by MBL.

The initial training consists of a combination of technical instruction and practical training as required by 29 CFR 1910.178(l). Technical instruction includes a classroom lecture with videos on forklift operations, traveling, loading, and workplace safety. Practical training includes demonstrations performed by a licensed/trained forklift operator followed by practical exercises performed by the trainee. The individual will perform a written test and be evaluated on their operator’s performance in the workplace. This training will be documented and stored on file with EHS.

For obtaining the hoisting license, individuals will be required to pass the MA DOT written exam scheduled upon state acceptance of submitted application.

9.2 License Renewal

Employees shall be required to participate in a two hour refresher training every other year by an outside vendor. Upon completion of the course, individual will receive a certification of completion by the vendor which is required to be submitted with the renewal application. In addition, another DOT physical must be performed and include with submittal. The MA Class 1 Hoisting license is valid for 2 years.

9.3 MBL Forklift Safety Training

As part of continuing training, EHS will provide a required yearly Forklift Safety Training for all MBL employees. Retraining may also be deemed necessary when it has been documented that the operator has been observed to operate the forklift in an unsafe and/or inappropriate manner, involved in an accident or near miss incident, is assigned to drive a different type of powered industrial truck, or a condition in the workplace changes in a manner that could affect safe operation of the forklift as directed by this policy and according to OSHA regulations. Curriculum for training shall cover the same topics as the initial training.