



Hazards Associated with Powered Industrial Trucks

Powered industrial trucks are used throughout many businesses. Their primary usage allows a variety of tasks associated with material handling to be performed quickly, efficiently, and economically. The hazards commonly associated with powered industrial trucks vary depending on the type of operations and how the operator drives the vehicle. Among these hazards are:

- Falling loads are caused by overloading or unbalanced loading.
- Operator has an obstructed view in the direction of travel.
- The vehicle is being operated at an excessive rate of speed.



There are other hazards related to the use of powered industrial trucks that are caused or enhanced by characteristics of the workplace. These hazards include the following:

- Operating in areas where there are narrow aisles.
- Operating where there are employees working in or adjacent to the path of travel of the powered industrial truck.
- Loading or unloading trailers and failing to ensure that the trailer floor will support the imposed load.
- Failure to ensure the wheels are properly blocked with wheel chocks.

Employer Responsibility

Only authorized personnel are allowed to operate a powered industrial truck. Prior to the employee's assignment as an operator, the employer must:

- Provide training to ensure that operators know how to use powered industrial trucks.
- Initiate a performance test to determine whether an employee can operate the assigned truck through the functions necessary to perform the required work.



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The employer must evaluate the potential operator on:

- Operating ability.
- Knowledge of the equipment.
- Knowledge of daily checks.

In addition, the employer must:

- Provide refresher training every three years.
- Provide interim refresher training if the employee is observed operating his or her powered industrial truck incorrectly.
- Provide specific training in the event an attachment is used.
- Identify the additional weight of the attachment used and approved by the manufacturer on the nameplate on the vehicle.

The applicable regulation is Title 29, Section 1910.178 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Employee Responsibility

An operator shall safeguard other employees at all times. If at any time a powered industrial truck is found to be in need of repair, is defective, or in any way unsafe, the truck must be taken out of service until it has been restored to a safe operating condition. Authorized personnel must make all repairs.

Free Technical Assistance

For a copy of the powered industrial truck standard or assistance with occupational safety and health questions—or to request free, professional, on-site consultation services—contact a safety or health consultant with the Indiana Department of Labor's INSafe division by e-mailing insafe@dol.IN.gov or by calling (317) 232-2688. Visit INSafe's website at www.IN.gov/dol/insafe.htm for more information.