

## POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCK SAFETY

Powered Industrial Trucks (PITs) used in warehouses or plants can create dangerous conditions for PIT operators and other workers. For example, operators can be injured when PITs are driven off loading docks or if the PIT tips over. Other workers can be injured by being struck by a PIT or a falling load. The following are some of the safety rules that operators and other workers should follow to stay safe on the job.

Powered industrial trucks are defined as any mobile power-propelled truck used to carry, push, pull, lift, stack or tier materials. PITs can be ridden or controlled by a walking operator. PITs include forklifts, stand up lifts, and powered pallet jacks.

### Operators

- Under OSHA and the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division regulations, only trained operators over the age of 18 may operate powered industrial trucks.
- At the beginning of each shift, inspect the PIT and required personal protective equipment carefully. For example, check the fluid levels, tires and brakes; inspect the hydraulic lines for leaks; test the horn; and ensure the personal protective equipment required for the operator is in satisfactory condition prior to use. Written documentation of the completed inspection should remain with the equipment.
- Prior to driving a PIT onto a truck bed, ensure that the wheels of the truck are either chocked or a mechanical truck restraint is used and that the truck and truck bed are capable of supporting the weight of the PIT and its load. Ensure that the dock plate or ramp is deployed and secured properly. Use dock lights or PIT mounted lighting to illuminate the inside of the trailer.
- Safe Travel. Operators must follow safe operating rules, including:
  - When carrying a load, the driver must face the destination of travel. It is preferable that the direction of travel be forward rather than in reverse.
  - Travel in reverse when carrying a bulky load which blocks vision in front.
  - Face the load uphill when driving on an incline.
  - When traveling from point to point, lower the load to the lowest level possible and travel at a safe speed.
  - Use extra caution on hills, corners and ramps and in areas where pedestrians are present.
  - Slow down on wet and slippery floors.
  - Slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles and other locations where vision is obstructed.
  - Follow in-plant traffic rules.
- Only PITs designed for more than one person may carry a passenger.
- When using order picker trucks designed to lift the operator to retrieve elevated items, operators must use proper PPE such as fall protection harnesses.

*This Toolbox Talk provides general guidelines for voluntary use by employers and is not intended to provide all necessary safety information and precautions for specific workplace operations and situations. The American Supply Association assumes no responsibility or liability for the use of the information provided.*

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## Industrial Trucks, cont.

- PITs designed to be used “off road” or in rough terrain are the only equipment that can be used in such an environment.
- Never lift loads that are greater than the rated capacity listed on the PIT’s nameplate. When picking up a load, place the forks so the load is square. Make sure the material is secure and won't fall off during travel. Before lifting a load, ensure there is adequate overhead clearance - be aware of overhead lamps, sprinkler heads and other potential hazards such as low electrical lines.
- Wear the seat belt if one is provided. Wear fall protection equipment if required. Drive with hands and feet inside the PIT. Do not eat, drink, smoke or use cell phones while operating PITs. Never smoke during refueling.
- Before leaving the PIT, lower the fork, turn off the motor and remove the key. Never leave the PIT running unattended. Never leave a load elevated when unattended.
- Never go under an elevated load or allow other workers to go under elevated loads.

## Other Workers

- When working around PITs, keep a sharp lookout. Don't depend on the operator being able to see you, and don't depend on hearing a horn or back-up alarm as surrounding noise may prevent this. Always check mirrors and blind spots.
- Use pedestrian walkways if available.
- Never go under an elevated load.
- Never ride on a PIT unless it is designed for riders.