



Powered Industrial Trucks Forklift Toolkit

Quick Guide to PIT / Forklift Safety & Best Practices

The SUNZ Insurance Risk Management Team is dedicated to enhancing safety and wellness practices for our Insureds. We want to provide you with the tools, knowledge, and resources so anyone who works on, with, or around forklifts, pallet jacks, or any Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) are as safe as possible.

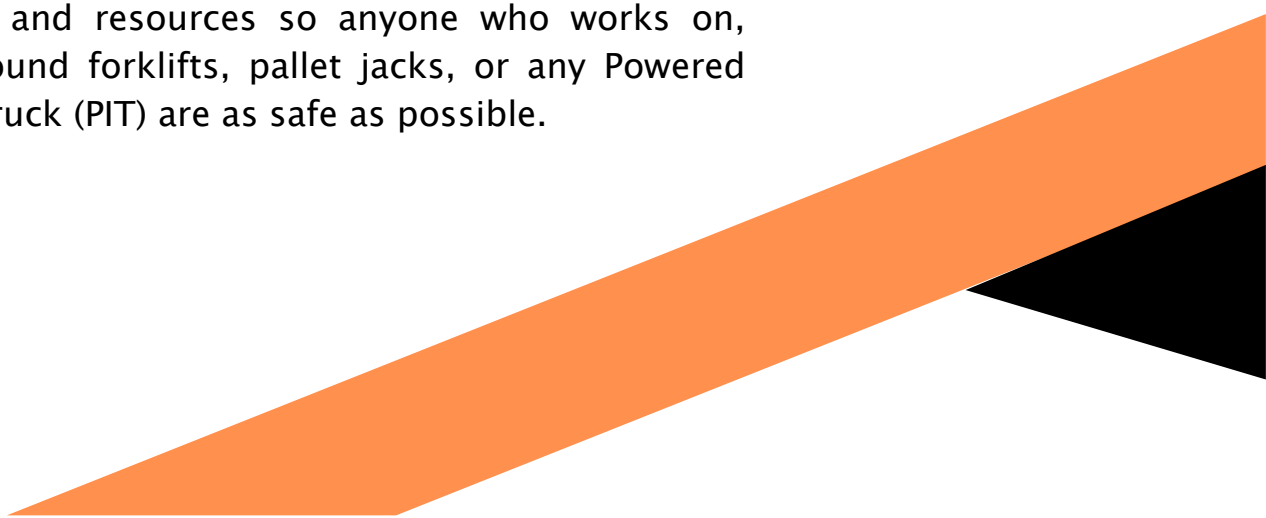


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Why is Forklift Safety Important?

Powered Industrial Trucks (PIT), forklifts specifically, are useful machines in many industries but could become extremely dangerous when operated by an untrained or inexperienced employee. A minor misstep can turn into a major disaster in the blink of an eye. However, forklift-related violations, accidents, injuries, and fatalities are preventable with the proper training and appropriate safety measures.

The SUNZ Risk Management team has identified an alarming upward trend of forklift-related accidents, with 8 significant loss incidents involving a forklift in 2020 – increasing to 19 incidents in 2021. After evaluating these accidents, SUNZ field Risk Managers have found the most common, contributing factors include:

- *Forklift / PIT operators not properly trained on the specific type of machine they are operating.*
- *Lowering or raising a load while the forklift is still in motion, driving forward or in reverse.*
- *Failure to look in the direction of travel.*
- *Not wearing a seatbelt.*
- *Lack of awareness training for employees working in the vicinity of forklift operations.*

These factors are found across multiple industries, but all are within the employers' control to prevent with the proper training.

Consider a recent case we experienced: a simple error caused an employee to be out of work for two months, placed on light duty the following three months, and the claim incurred over \$126,000. The employee was operating a forklift in reverse and had a hand outside of the protected area. The employee was distracted, speaking with a coworker, and crushed said hand between the forklift and a wall. That injured hand will likely never be the same again and it could have been avoided by adhering to proper safety and training.





SUNZ is not alone in experiencing these incidents. Simple, avoidable mistakes are easily turned into lessons, bringing awareness to the increasing frequency in forklift-related accidents. For example, [KPA's Forklift Safety: Simple Mistakes Lead to Costly Results](#) highlights a similar story – an employee, distracted on their cell phone, walked into a forklift operator's blind spot while driving in reverse, resulting in the forklift operator running over and crushing a foot of the distracted employee. Another accident that could have been prevented if proper forklift safety training was followed.

Not every accident is as simple as a crushed appendage - forklift-related injuries range in severity and can even be deadly. In 2020, there were 78 forklift-related fatalities and 7,290 non-fatal, forklift-associated injuries that included days away from work. The average number of days away from work increased to 17 the same year due to these types of injuries ([NSC Injury Facts](#)). OSHA also takes PIT/forklift matters seriously and frequently issues citations for incorrect PIT/forklift use. In fiscal year 2021, Powered Industrial Trucks in general industry was in the top ten most frequently cited standards with [1,626 citations, 1,088 Inspections, and over \\$5.7 million in penalties.](#)

PIT / Forklift Training Requirements

1. Formal Instruction (e.g., lecture, discussion, interactive computer learning, video tape, printed material)

- General principles of safe PIT/forklift operation.
- The various types of PITs being used.
- Hazards created by use of the PIT/forklift in the workplace.
- General safety requirements of the OSHA PIT/forklift standard.
- Sunz Risk Management Center (RMC) contains samples of formal instruction.

2. Practical (hands-on) Training & Evaluation (must include truck-related topics & workplace-related topics)

- Hands-on training on the operation of the PIT/forklift(s) that will be used.
- Visual Inspection Process
- Operational Inspection Process
- Must cover facility specifics
- Hands-on evaluation is required and must be conducted by an authorized qualified trainer. (See Important Reminders for more details).
- [Attachment 1: Sample Forklift Certification for Practical Evaluation](#)

3. A refresher training course that evaluates the operator's skill level when one of the following occurs:

- An operator is found to be unsafely operating a PIT/forklift.
- An accident or near miss takes place.
- There is a change of equipment.
- There is a significant change in the workplace.
- An evaluation indicates the need.
- Once every three years, a complete evaluation of each operator's performance must be conducted.

4. Certification of Training

- Operator name
- Training date
- Evaluation date
- Equipment Class
- Name of person(s) performing the training or evaluation
- [Attachment 2: Sample PIT/Forklift Operator Safety Training Certification of Completion](#)
- [Attachment 3: Sample PIT/Forklift Operator Certification Wallet Cards \(Optional but Highly Recommended to document training and track operator qualifications\).](#)





Important Reminders

Before PIT / Forklift training, read through these important reminders that are applicable to all industries. They are pivotal to employee safety.

- It is a violation of Federal law for anyone UNDER 18 years old to operate or ride on a PIT / Forklift.
- It is a violation of Federal law for anyone OVER 18 years old to operate a PIT / Forklift that has NOT been properly trained and certified to do so.
- The information in this document is referenced from Title 29 CFR 1910.178 Click here to view ([29 CFR 1910.178](#)).
- **State Plans:** 28 U.S. states and territories have their own OSHA-approved occupational safety and health programs. These State Plans dictate and enforce their own occupational safety and health standards that are required to be at least as effective as OSHA's in protecting workers but may have different or additional requirements. Check if your workforce is subject to a State Plan and learn more at [osha.gov/stateplans/](https://www.osha.gov/stateplans/).
- Employers are required to train employees in all operating instructions, warnings, and precautions listed in the **operator's manual** for the type of machine which the employee is being trained to operate.
 - Due to the vast variety of makers, types, and classifications of PITs / forklifts, reference each machine's operator's manual for training specifics.
 - [OSHA's PIT / Forklift eTool](#) provides more information on requirements, best practices, and forklift classification examples.
- Definition of a 'Qualified Trainer' to conduct the practical component of PIT / Forklift Training: an individual with the knowledge, training, and experience to train PIT / forklift operators and evaluate their performance.
 - OSHA's [Letter of Interpretation \(Standard Number: 1910.178 1910.178\(l\)\(2\)\(iii\)\)](#) on PIT/forklift operator trainer qualifications.
- Forklift Safety Awareness Training should expand to include those who will be working in the vicinity of PITs / forklifts. The safety of those working around forklifts is the responsibility of everyone in the work environment, whether operating a machine or as a pedestrian.

Staffing Company Reminder

Joint Responsibility

SUNZ recognizes the disproportionate rate at which temporary workers are injured in workplace accidents, and in some cases frequency of injuries is near double that of the traditional employment relationship. Most staffing companies take the safety and health of the temporary employees they send to Client/Host Employer sites seriously, but meeting OSHA's regulations requires more - it requires partnering with the host employers, planning, collaborating, and training employees. Equal responsibility is shared with clients, and there should be regular follow-up at client work sites where temporary workers are assigned.

Whenever temporary workers are employed, OSHA will consider the host company and staffing company as "joint employers". As joint employers, both companies will "have responsibilities for protecting the safety and health of the temporary worker under the OSH Act."

Protecting Temporary Workers – the Highlights:

- While the extent of responsibility under the law of staffing agencies and host employers is dependent on the specific facts of each case, staffing agencies and host employers are jointly responsible for maintaining a safe work environment for temporary workers - including, for example, ensuring that OSHA's training, hazard communication, and recordkeeping requirements are fulfilled.
- OSHA could hold both the host and temporary employers responsible for the violative condition(s) - and that can include lack of adequate training regarding workplace hazards. Temporary staffing agencies and host employers share control over the worker and are therefore jointly responsible for temporary workers' safety and health.
- Both host employers and staffing agencies have roles in complying with workplace health and safety requirements and they share responsibility for ensuring worker safety and health.
- A key concept is that each employer should consider the hazards it is able to prevent and correct, and in a position to comply with OSHA standards. For example: staffing agencies might provide general safety and health training, and host employers provide specific training tailored to the workplace equipment/hazards.
- The host employer must still verify a PIT/forklift operators training and provide site-specific information and training on the particular types of PIT/forklift(s) and working conditions present at the worksite.

Where, Who, and When

PIT/Forklift Safety Training Requirements

Where does Forklift Safety Training need to be conducted?

- ◆ Anywhere a forklift or PIT are in use.

Who needs Forklift Safety Training?

- ◆ Anyone who will be operating a forklift or PIT.
- ◆ All employees working in the vicinity of forklifts.

When is Forklift Certification / Safety Training needed?

- ◆ All new operators BEFORE initial use or use of a new forklift/PIT model.
- ◆ Every three (3) years, a complete evaluation of an operator's performance.
- ◆ If the operator performs unsafe actions while operating a forklift.
- ◆ An accident or near miss occurs.
- ◆ When there is a change of equipment.
- ◆ If there is a significant change(s) in the workplace.
- ◆ An evaluation/safety assessment indicates there is a need.



Essential Tools for PIT/Forklift Safety



Written PIT / Forklift Safety Program

Attachment 4: Sample Forklift Operation Program / Policy



Documented Training & Certification

Attachment 1: Sample Forklift Certification for Practical Evaluation



Daily Safety Inspection Forms for PIT

Attachment 5: Sample Forklift Operator's Checklist



Regular Maintenance - PIT

Attachment 6: Sample 6-Week (250-Hour) Forklift Maintenance Checklist for Electric Forklifts

Attachment 7: Sample 6-Week (250-Hour) Forklift Maintenance Checklist for Internal Combustion Forklifts

Attachment 8: Sample 12-Month (2000-Hour) Forklift Maintenance Checklist for Electric Forklifts

Attachment 9: Sample 12-Month (2000-Hour) Forklift Maintenance Checklist for Internal Combustion Forklifts

Basic Guide to Forklift Safety Compliance

Best Practices Checklist

Please select all applicable classifications of PIT used at the Worksite:

- Class I: Electric motor rider trucks
- Class II: Electric motor narrow aisle trucks
- Class III: Electric motor hand trucks or hand/rider trucks
- Class IV: Internal combustion engine trucks (solid/cushion tires)
- Class V: Internal combustion engine trucks (pneumatic tires)
- Class VI: Electric and internal combustion engine tractors
- Class VII: Rough terrain forklift trucks

- Written PIT Safety Program in place: Y N
 - o Program is readily available for review: Y N
 - o Program contains all essential elements: Y N
 - o Updated at least annually: Y N
 - o Covers all types of PIT used: Y N
 - o All affected employees are trained on PIT program: Y N
- Documented Training & Certification for all operators: Y N
 - o Competent trainer conducts training & evaluations: Y N
 - o Formal Instruction and Practical Evaluation completed: Y N
 - o All PIT operators are in possession of current certification: Y N
 - o Required Initial and Refresher training completed: Y N
- Daily documented safety inspection of all PIT equipment completed: Y N
 - o Inspection forms are readily available for review: Y N
 - o Inspection forms are completed by each operator before shift start: Y N
 - o All required components are inspected before operation: Y N
 - o If found unsafe, equipment is locked out to prevent use: Y N
- Equipment is in good condition and regularly maintained: Y N
 - o Records of recommended/required service are kept: Y N
 - o All safety devices are present and operational: Y N
 - o Equipment is stored and cleaned properly: Y N
 - o All attachments used with PITs are designed and certified by equipment manufacturer(s): Y N