



## Welcome to the Fork Lift Truck Association Safety 4MOST campaign.

Its aim is to remind us all of our basic responsibilities when it comes to the safe operation of fork lift trucks. In fact, we almost called it a 'Back to Basics' campaign – but we want it to be more than that.

The idea started when an FLTA member remarked on how many counterbalance truck operators were still not wearing seat restraints.

A subsequent survey showed that as many as 90% of operators were guilty of this.

Seat restraints come into their own when there is a major incident, with a truck turning on its side or falling off the back of a lorry or loading bay. Thankfully such incidents are rare, but when they do occur, and the operator is not wearing a belt, you end up with, literally, a bloody mess! Roll-overs are not called mouse-trapping without good reason. Then there are the many other, less bloody, incidents that 'only' result in a bump to the head, a broken rib or a dislocated shoulder.

Talking to some operators, it's almost as if this doesn't matter – just the way it was before the wearing of belts

in cars became compulsory. Well, let us assure you that a bump or a break or a dislocation does hurt – in fact it can hurt a lot! And even if this doesn't convince everyone, perhaps the resulting time off work, loss of productivity and increased pressure on work colleagues should persuade people that seat belts are to be taken seriously.

Of course, there are occasional tasks where it may be impractical to operate a truck whilst wearing a seat belt. That's fine, and for such a task you should carry out a risk assessment and put adequate procedures in place to minimise the hazards. However, these tasks don't account for anything like 90% of fork lift truck operations. Most of the time seat belts are not being worn because operators are lazy and management is turning a blind eye!

The wearing of seat belts is just one example, and it may not apply to many types of lifting equipment, but there are many similar, basic principles that are essential to the safety of all materials handling operations. You will find them

summed up in the **Safety 4MOST** pack for easy, regular reference.

The **Safety 4MOST** campaign is designed to support the anticipated HSE Route Map for the Safe Operation of Workplace Transport. The FLTA fully supports this HSE initiative and hopes that all involved in operating fork lift trucks will support it too.

Inside the **Safety 4MOST** pack you will find four small, double-sided posters. As you would expect, they cover **M**anagement safety, **O**perator safety, **S**ite safety and **T**ruck safety. There is nothing new. This is not rocket science. But there are lots of simple reminders – going Back to Basics – that can save lives and limbs. Find time to read them and – importantly – find space to display them in your workplace.

You have the opportunity to prevent tragedies, by supporting this campaign and by promoting, encouraging and enforcing safe practice at all times. Make the **MOST** of it.

## creating and maintaining a safe working environment is a key function of management



1. Management in this context should cover all levels - from the managing director through to supervisors and shift leaders.
2. Managers have ultimate responsibility.  
  
“Next time you blame an operator for poor performance, remember who employed him or her, remember who determines the level of training provided and remember who decides what equipment to purchase.” Dr Will Murray.
3. Risk assessment is a key tool in the fight for a safe working environment. This includes the layout and condition of your site, the type and specification of equipment used, the maintenance regimes, and the training, monitoring and discipline of your operators.
4. A safe manager:
  - Understands the tasks to be performed and the risks involved.
  - Sees to it that regular inspections of the site and equipment take place.
  - Ensures that remedial action is taken to keep the site and equipment in a safe condition.

- Makes sure that work practices are designed to minimise risk.
- Knows that different types of materials handling equipment have different operating characteristics, and that it may be necessary to use different types of equipment for different tasks and/or locations.
- Maintains an awareness of developments in materials handling equipment so that best use can be made of the safest and most appropriate equipment for the task to be performed.
- Insists that maintenance is carried out in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations and that Thorough Examinations are carried out as required by current regulations.
- Acknowledges the requirement for operator training and the monitoring of skills and attitudes.
- Appreciates that, if tasks vary and different equipment is to be used, additional training will probably be required.
- Is able to identify good and bad practice and has authority to take remedial action to rectify poor performance as quickly as possible.

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*Dr Will Murray*

## A safe operator respects his/her equipment and looks out for co-workers

1. Safe operators take training seriously and maintain high standards at all times.
2. Safe operators don't try to operate types of equipment they haven't been trained to use – and don't allow untrained colleagues to operate, or mess with, any kind of materials handling equipment.
3. Safe operators check their truck properly before every shift. They report any defects and won't use a truck that's considered to be unsafe.
4. Safe operators don't take short cuts but observe good practice at all times. In particular they:
  - Don't speed.
  - Don't overload their truck (and they check with their supervisor if they are unsure).
  - Use the parking brake, correctly, as they have been trained.
5. Safe operators understand that they and others are at great risk if their truck overturns, and will do all they can to avoid this happening.
  - Wear the seat belt (if fitted).
  - Keep well clear of pedestrians and potential hazards.
  - Slow down when near pedestrians, trucks and other hazards.
  - Take particular care in loading bays.
  - Respect their truck.
  - Look out for their co-workers.



## Some of the most common reasons for trucks overturning are:

- Travelling on slopes that are too steep.
- Going over slippery surfaces such as oil or grease patches, ice, or even just water.
- Trying to cross soft or uneven ground.
- Going over kerbs, steps or other edges.
- Being overloaded or unevenly loaded.
- Going too fast, especially around corners.
- Carrying loads at a dangerous height.



## a safe site should be clean and tidy!

There are three main components of a safe site:

### 1. Design

A site can be designed to minimise risk. This is easiest to achieve with the design of a new building or complex. However, reviewing the risks and re-designing where possible can improve even an old site. Some of the main points to consider are:

- Pedestrian segregation, with a complete ban on non-essential personnel in areas where fork lift trucks operate. Provide clear, well-signed crossing points if needed.
- Provide one-way routes where possible. Movement aisles should be sufficiently wide and free of obstacles.
- Consider speed limits and provide signs. Provide other signs as needed and consider the use of wall or rack-mounted mirrors to enhance visibility.
- Minimise the need for reversing.

- Minimise the use of ramps and other gradients.
- Provide high levels of lighting, and good ventilation if diesel or gas trucks are in use.
- Pay particular attention to interfaces such as lorry docking areas.
- Provide space for the parking and maintenance of fork lift trucks and for the charging of battery-operated equipment.

### 2. Maintenance

Maintenance affects safety and is everyone's responsibility. Debris should be removed and spillages cleared up as they occur – not left for cleaners.

- Keep the whole area clear of rubbish and any operating debris such as packing material and broken pallets.
- Keep surfaces clean, free of oil, grease and other substances, and in good condition. Repair cracks and potholes as they occur.
- Maintain lights, signs, barriers and other safety features.

### 3. Attitude

Demand a safe attitude to safety across the site. Never just assume that safe practices will be followed – and don't get complacent. Schedule routine checks. In particular:

- Enforce speed limits and routes.
- Provide site familiarisation training for new employees and agency operators.
- Discuss site safety issues as part of regular Health and Safety meetings.
- Involve everyone in site safety.

## A safe truck is one that's suited to its task and location and maintained on a regular basis



1. Make sure the task and location are properly assessed before a fork lift truck is bought or hired. There are many types of fork lift truck available and you need the correct one for the job. Seek professional advice.
2. If the task and/or location changes, consider whether you need to change the truck. Make sure it still meets your requirements and is safe for the job.
3. Remember:
  - Warehouse equipment – such as reach trucks, stackers, order pickers and pallet trucks – is not designed for outdoor use or on rough, unstable surfaces.
  - Counterbalance trucks are designed for outdoor use, but still on generally smooth, sound and level surfaces. Diesel and even gas trucks need good ventilation if used indoors.
  - Uneven, rough, potholed and slippery surfaces will require an all-terrain truck, and this must be used with skill and caution.
  - You may need different trucks to perform different functions safely.
4. A truck doesn't need every modern development to be safe, but technology does move on – not least in the fork truck industry. Keep up to date with developments. If you have a particular problem, check and see if there may be a potential new solution. For example:
  - There are different ways in which the speed of a fork lift truck can be controlled, and this can be zoned for different parts of the site.
  - There are trucks designed to give greater visibility, and these can be enhanced by the use of cameras.
  - There are trucks with rotating or tilting cabs to reduce the strain of certain manoeuvres.
5. Attachments can enhance safety but must be selected with professional advice and the truck must have a different rating plate for every attachment used.

## Maintenance and inspection

Even the safest of trucks will not stay safe for long unless it is properly maintained. There needs to be a formal regime understood by all. This should consist of:

**Daily Checks** Properly recorded and supervised daily or pre-shift checks are carried out to ensure that the truck is safe to use. Some additional checks may be required weekly. Faults that may affect safety should be rectified before the truck is used. These checks should be carried out by the operator of the truck.

**Preventive Maintenance** This is routine maintenance, carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the truck. When completed with an inspection, it may identify potential problems before they occur and hence save time and money. These checks are usually scheduled by hours or months and are best provided through an agreed maintenance contract.

**Thorough Examination** This is a legal requirement similar to an MOT. It must be carried out by a Competent Person at least every 12 months and is different to, and separate from, maintenance. Further advice and guidance is available on [www.thoroughexamination.org](http://www.thoroughexamination.org).

**Repairs.** There is no point in carrying out any of the above checks and inspections if remedial action is not taken to rectify faults as and when they are identified.