

Vehicle & Forklift Safety:

Control the Risk Around Moving Vehicles

Workplace transport risk assessment, segregating pedestrians and vehicles, forklift truck licensing, pre-use checks and RIDDOR reporting for vehicle incidents.

 Last reviewed: August 2026

 HSE · LOLER 1998 · PUWER 1998

 England, Scotland and Wales

ukworkrights.co.uk

In Northern Ireland, similar duties come from Northern Ireland's own health and safety law. Contact HSENI (Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland), not the HSE.

Workplace transport — a major killer

- Workplace transport incidents kill around **50 workers per year** and seriously injure many more (HSE)
- Forklifts alone cause approximately **1,300 serious injuries and 10 fatalities** annually in the UK
- Common causes: **vehicles hitting people, vehicles overturning, people falling from vehicles, loads falling**
- Most incidents are **preventable** through proper segregation, training and management
- Employers must carry out a **workplace transport risk assessment** and implement safe systems
- High-risk environments: **warehouses, construction sites, loading bays, farms, quarries, distribution centres**

▲ PEDESTRIANS AND VEHICLES DON'T MIX

The most effective control is physical separation of pedestrians and vehicles. Rules and signs alone are not enough — barriers, one-way systems and crossing points matter.

Forklift truck — key requirements

- Only **trained and authorised operators** may drive forklifts — RTITB or ITSSAR-accredited training is the standard
- FLTs must have a current **LOLER thorough examination** — typically every 6 months for lifting equipment
- **Pre-use checks** must be completed every shift — tyres, forks, mast, hydraulics, lights, horn, seatbelt
- Loads must never exceed the **rated capacity** shown on the data plate
- Carry forks **low when travelling** — not raised
- Pedestrians must never travel on forklifts unless a dedicated passenger seat is fitted
- Seatbelts must be worn when fitted

PRE-USE CHECK

- Forks and carriage — cracks, wear
- Tyres — pressure, damage
- Hydraulics — leaks, operation
- Lights, horn, reversing alarm
- Seatbelt — working
- Any defect — report and take off road

NEVER BYPASS

A forklift taken off road for a defect must not be used until repaired and re-checked. Never pressure operators to use unsafe equipment.

Controlling vehicle risks on site

1

Physical segregation

Barriers, Armco, raised kerbs or ground markings to keep pedestrians away from vehicle routes. Signs alone are not sufficient.

2

Designated pedestrian routes

Clearly marked footpaths, crossing points with good visibility, and sufficient lighting. Pedestrians must know their safe routes.

3

One-way systems

Eliminate reversing where possible — reversing is the highest risk manoeuvre in workplace transport. Use banksmen where reversing is unavoidable.

4

Speed limits and enforcement

Set and enforce appropriate speed limits. Use speed humps in pedestrian areas. Speeding is a common cause of serious incidents.

Frequently asked questions

Q What licence do I need to drive a forklift at work?

There is no such thing as a forklift licence — operators must be adequately trained and should be authorised in writing by their employer, but using an accredited training provider is voluntary. Training is site and equipment specific — training on one type of FLT does not automatically cover all types.

Q Can a banksman authorise a dangerous reversing manoeuvre?

No. A banksman guides the driver during a manoeuvre — they cannot authorise a manoeuvre that is inherently unsafe. Both the driver and the banksman share responsibility for safety. If the manoeuvre cannot be done safely, it should not happen.

Q What is a LOLER thorough examination?

A statutory inspection of lifting equipment (including forklifts, hoists, cranes) by a competent person — typically every 6 months for equipment used to lift people, or 12 months for other lifting equipment. The certificate must be available for inspection.

Q What incidents must be reported under RIDDOR?

All work-related deaths, specified injuries (fractures, amputations, etc.) and over-7-day absences resulting from workplace transport incidents must be reported to HSE using the online forms at hse.gov.uk/riddor. Dangerous occurrences (e.g. an overturned forklift, even without injury) may also be reportable.

Delivery notes & attendance record

Before you start

Separating people from vehicles is the control that matters most. Cover reversing and blind spots — most workplace transport deaths involve a vehicle reversing or a pedestrian struck.

Questions to ask the team

1. Where do pedestrians and vehicles cross paths here?
2. Who is authorised to operate the forklift, and is their training current?
3. What are the blind spots on the vehicles we use?
4. Do we use a banksman for reversing, and does everyone know the signals?

The law behind this talk

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 reg. 17 (organisation of traffic routes); Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER); Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)

Employers must give workers comprehensible information, instruction and training on the risks they face — Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 s.2(2)(c) and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 reg. 10. Keep the record below as evidence that you did.

Attendance record

Topic

Vehicle & Forklift Safety: Control the Risk Around Moving Vehicles

Date

Site / location

Delivered by

Actions agreed

Next talk due

Attendees

Name	Signature

Use the Print handout button to print this record. General guidance only, not legal advice. This toolbox talk is generic material and is not a substitute for a suitable and sufficient risk assessment by a competent person. Employers remain responsible for their duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

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