

What to do if You Are Involved in a Forklift Accident

When working with or around a forklift, it is important for you to know how forklift accidents occur and what to do if you are injured by a forklift.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, January 25, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Attorney Alvin F. de Levie and his firm work tirelessly for victims of catastrophic industrial accidents. Over the course of many years, the firm has worked with those suffering due to industrial equipment accidents.



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Alvin F. de Levie, Attorney

What Do I Do If I Am Involved In A [Forklift Accident](#)?

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), forklift accidents account for more than 96,000 injuries every year. Of those accidents, 85 resulted in a fatality and 34,900 caused serious injuries, such as broken bones and amputations. With over 855,000 forklifts in operation across the United States, it is important for you to know how forklift accidents occur and what to do if you are injured by a forklift.

Why Are Forklifts So Dangerous?

There are many types of forklifts, but all of them share several qualities that make them much more dangerous than other kinds of industrial equipment:

1. Forklifts are very heavy: some forklifts weigh in at over 9,000 pounds...3 times heavier than an average car. If the forklift runs into a person walking in its path or turns over onto the driver, the victim often suffers catastrophic injuries.
2. Forklifts can travel fast: Forklifts are typically able to travel up to 18-mph. While that doesn't seem very fast when compared to a car or a motorcycle, forklifts are often used in warehouses with tight corners and a lot of people moving around the area. By the time you notice a forklift coming, it may be too late to move to safety.

3. Forklifts Only Have Front Brakes: This, along with their weight, makes forklifts much harder to stop, especially if traveling at high speeds. This makes it harder for forklift operators to avoid collisions with people and other equipment.

4. Forklifts Are Rear-Balanced: Forklifts are often designed with most of the weight built into the rear of the forklift to accommodate the heavy loads they are meant to carry in the front. This can make it difficult for the operator to handle the forklift, especially if he or she has not been properly trained.

5. Forklifts Turn with The Rear Wheels: Unlike cars, forklifts are turned using the rear wheels. This can cause the back side of the forklift to swing outward, especially when making tight turns, and increases the risk of the forklift tipping over.

6. Forklifts Carry Their Loads in The Front: Because the loads carried by the forklift are front loaded, it can be hard for the operator to see what's going on in front of him while driving.

7. Forklifts Raise Heavy Objects: Forklifts are commonly used to raise heavy objects and loads many feet in the air to perform tasks like stacking pallets and retrieving supplies from high storage shelves. Improper loading and handling increases the risk these heavy objects will fall from the forklift and cause injuries to the people working below.

These unique characteristics of forklifts, making them dangerous to both the operator and those working on the ground.

What Can I Do to Avoid a Forklift Accident?

Many forklift accidents are simply due to the improper or inadequate training provided to the operators. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, almost 70% of forklift accidents could be avoided by simply implementing more comprehensive training programs. In addition to training, the Centers for Disease Control recommends taking the following precautions:

- Make sure all warning signals are working, such as back-up alarms

- Check for damage before operating the forklift and reporting any damage to a supervisor or other person responsible for maintaining the forklift;

- Use extreme caution when traveling on ramps

- Make sure not to raise or lower the forks while the forklift is moving

-Always look toward your travel path and make sure to keep a clear view of what is in front of you at all times.

-Do not use the forklift to elevate people who are standing on the forks

-Do not use the forklift to handle loads that are heavier than the capacity of the forklift

-Make sure the area is clear of personnel when lifting or lowering objects from high shelves and other high areas.

Where Do Forklift Accidents Occur?

Forklift accidents obviously occur more frequently in warehouses, industrial centers and construction sites where they are needed to move products and heavy equipment. However, forklifts are commonly used in many other industries, such as farming, airports, military bases, dockyards, hardware stores, and municipal waste and recycling centers. Accidents are more likely to occur on family farms and other smaller operations where adequate training programs and regulations may not be in place.

What Should I Do If I've Been Involved In A Forklift Accident?

Sometimes, no matter how vigilant you have been, a forklift accident cannot be avoided. If you are involved in a forklift accident, you need to contact an [experienced attorney](#) immediately. DO NOT DELAY! There is a Statute of Limitations in Pennsylvania requiring that any forklift accident lawsuit be started within two (2) years of the date of the accident which has caused your injuries. If you do not bring a lawsuit within the applicable two-year period, any claim that you may have will be forever barred.

Forklift accidents are often more complicated than other kinds of accidents. First, your right to sue may be limited by the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Act if you were a co-employee of the forklift operator and were on the job at the time you were injured. Even if you are not allowed to sue the forklift operator or his or her employer, you may have a products liability claim against the manufacturer of the forklift for manufacturing defects, inadequate warnings and other products liability claims. You need an experienced attorney to review the facts of your case to determine what kinds of claims you may make.

Second, forklift accident cases involve a range of complexities. There may be several individuals and entities who are responsible for the accident, including the driver, his or her employer, the owner of the forklift, and the manufacturer of the forklift. Additionally, forklift operators and owners are typically governed by special federal and state laws and regulations which do not apply to other accidents. You

need an attorney who has the experience and resources to fully investigate the accident and identify all those who are responsible.

At the Law Office of Alvin F. de Levie, Esq., we have years of experience handling cases for those who have suffered catastrophic injuries accidents caused by industrial equipment. We have handled cases from Philadelphia and the surrounding counties to Allegheny County, including Blair County, Centre County, Lycoming County, Montour County, Mifflin County, Cambria County, Cumberland County and Dauphin County.

If you have suffered a catastrophic injury, please call our firm – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – at 844-777-2529 for a no charge consultation. You can also contact us via email to: One of our team members will be in immediate contact with you. We maintain offices throughout Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, State College, Bellefonte and Lock Haven, and we are willing to meet any clients throughout the Commonwealth.

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