



If OSHA Knocks On Your Warehouse Door Tomorrow, Will You Be Ready?

Tomorrow an OSHA inspector may knock on your company door and request a walk-through of your warehouse. He may approach a random forklift operator to inquire if training had been provided for the lift. You may be asked to provide proof of sufficient forklift operator training as well as daily inspection sheets for your entire fleet.

Will you be ready?

Preparing For the Visit

To prepare yourself for this visit, you must first review the employees that operate powered industrial equipment. OSHA requires every forklift operator to be trained by their employer before driving a lift. Does your company have a program in place to train incoming operators? Within the warehouse, are employees - including supervisors - without training being allowed to operate equipment?

Reviewing the Current Training Program

After creating a list of employees that need training, you now have the responsibility of providing forklift operator classroom and hands-on instruction. OSHA regulation 1910.178 states various truck-related topics that must be covered during the initial training. Further, all operator training and evaluation shall be “conducted by persons who have the knowledge, training, and experience to train powered industrial truck operators and evaluate their competence.”

Actions at this stage should include a review of your company’s training made available to employees. Does it cover the topics required by OSHA? At minimum, does it provide formal instruction, practical training and evaluation of the operator’s performance in the workplace? What is the background of the company trainer and does he/she have the ample experience needed to teach operators?

Analyzing Refresher Training

To maintain forklift safety, OSHA requires each operator to participate in a refresher training course every three years. Refresher training allows the company to not only highlight the basic safety issues, but to provide information regarding changes in the law and changes within the company facility that could affect safe operations.

Refresher training may need to be conducted earlier if an operator has been observed to operate the equipment in an unsafe manner, has been involved in an accident or near-miss incident, has received an

evaluation that reveals the operator is not performing safe operations or has been assigned to a new piece of equipment.

Are unsafe operations addressed quickly at your facility? If an operator is noted for reckless driving, is refresher training performed and recorded? Do supervisors create an open door policy for employees to address warehouse concerns? Does the company log employee training dates and provide refresher training at the three year mark?

Weighing the Training Options

You've done your homework and know which employees need forklift operator training, but now have to decide the best way to accomplish the task. The two options are to conduct training in-house by designating a company trainer or to outsource with a dependable training ally. Some companies make the decision to do a combination of the two.

In-house training is well suited for large companies with many forklift operators and/or those that experience a great deal of turnover. Having a company trainer allows flexibility to the training schedule, especially when a new hire needs immediate attention.

Outsourced training provides a convenient solution for your company. A trusted vendor will ensure conducted training will fulfill OSHA requirements, record class information such as dates and employees and will supply follow-up materials to place within company files as back-up. Sending new hires to an outside source may be a wise use of budget dollars as this frees up higher wage supervisors from having to spend those hours training.

Whatever your decision, ProLift can assist your company in providing forklift operator training that keeps your employees safe, product free from damage and OSHA criteria met.

Contact Patrick Clark at 800-583-4023 or pclark@proliftequipment.com to learn about our options for trainers and operators! Or visit www.proliftequipment.com to register your employees for ProLift-site training dates.