

# National Forklift Safety Day 2024

## Respond: How to prevent an incident becoming an accident

The second instalment of National Forklift Safety Day 2024, **Respond**, will examine the actions that should be taken in the immediate aftermath of an accident. However, as we highlighted in the previous phase of the campaign, **Prepare**, operators and employers that know how to identify and manage incidents can prevent accidents from happening altogether.

In this document, we will explore a series of incidents that have the potential to become accidents. Each scenario will include a brief description and some appropriate steps that could be taken to reduce the likelihood of an accident. In doing so, we hope to recap the key messages from **Prepare**.

## Scenarios and Solutions

**Scenario:** Damaged or unstable load. Damaged and unstable loads can collapse onto persons, but they also have the potential to cause a forklift tip-over.

**Solution:** Damaged and unstable loads cannot be handled under a generic lifting plan. Each case must be considered individually, but the following points should be considered:

- Damaged and unstable loads should be clearly identified and kept in a segregated area.
- Do not stack loads where there may be potential for instability or collapse.
- Never exceed the capacity of the bottom of the stack.
- An individual lifting plan should be created by somebody competent to do so. It should address the specific risks and identify the necessary equipment, supervision, precautions and mitigations. Everybody involved should be instructed to understand their responsibilities and the actions required in the event of an accident.

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**Scenario:** Shifted load in a lorry. This can lead to falling cargo, posing serious risks for drivers and pedestrians, however, the highest risk occurs if a person is on, or near, the trailer whilst MHE is operating.

**Solution:** There are a series of measures that can be taken to minimise the risk of a shifted load causing an accident, including:

- Correct loading of the trailer will prevent this hazard from occurring. Loads should be secured to the trailer and sufficiently stable for transport. For comprehensive guidance on this, please visit this [page](#).
- Do not allow bystanders in the area where MHE is operating. This includes prohibiting people from being on the trailer bed or on the opposite side of the trailer from the MHE.

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- Where a person is required to adjust curtains or tarpaulins, to place or remove trailer struts or straps, the operation of any lifting equipment used for loading or unloading must stop until it is assured that the person is in a safe location.

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**Scenario:** Trailer driveway. A number of fatalities have occurred when trailers have been moved tipping over a forklift either actively engaged in loading/unloading or located in the immediate vicinity.

**Solution:** Guidance on safety on and around a vehicle loading area can be found [here](#). Trailer driveway can be prevented by:

- Ensuring that the lorry driver is out of the cab and in a safe location, e.g. a rest area or a designated viewing area.
- Temporary storage of vehicle keys in a safe location.
- Loading dock traffic lights and a vehicle restraint system. For more information on vehicle restraints, please visit [here](#).

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**Scenario:** Load lost in racking. Picking a damaged, unstable or collapsed load from a racking system introduces a high risk of falling objects, both in the working aisle and in adjacent aisles. It can also damage other loads, lead to tip-over and racking collapse

**Solution:** Inspect the load and the racking system, and make them safe before proceeding:

- Checking on high-level damage is one of the very few occasions where the use of non-integrated work platforms may be considered. Refer to [HSE PM28](#) for further information and guidance.
- Under no circumstances should a person ever be lifted on the forks, or a pallet on the fork, of a forklift truck.
- Use appropriate equipment, e.g. a MEWP, to access the load and return it to a safe condition.

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**Scenario:** You notice a slight malfunction or mechanical fault on the forklift truck you'll be driving.

**Solution:** Immediate action is required if you notice any fault with your forklift, however seemingly insignificant. Here are some of the measures you can take to prevent a mechanical-related accident:

- Conduct daily pre-operation checks to ensure that forklifts are compliant, safe and fault-free. See our webstore for the necessary [documentation](#).

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- Be aware of your forklift whilst using it and record any potential faults or incidents, including minor impacts, shock loads, etc.
- Report your findings to your line manager to ensure any necessary inspections or maintenance work is carried out.

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**Scenario:** You see poor floor conditions before you begin your forklift trip, such as slippery, uneven or cluttered floors.

**Solution:** Poor floor conditions pose numerous risks and contribute to an unsafe work environment. There is a variety of actions operators should take to prevent an immediate accident and ensure that floor conditions remain adequate:

- Stop operating the vehicle and report any hazards to your line manager immediately. Be sure to accurately describe the location and nature of the hazard.
- Depending on the nature of the poor floor conditions, use cones or signs to warn colleagues and pedestrians.
- Cooperate with colleagues to conduct daily inspections, implement permanent solutions such as non-slip mats and improved drainage systems and participate in training sessions about safety protocols.

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### Remember to STOP

If you see something that resembles any of these scenarios at work, or anything else that has the potential to cause a problem, then prompt action to avoid an accident is crucial. To prevent an incident from turning into an accident, you must STOP:



- **S - Stop**
- **T - Think**
- **O - Organise**
- **P - Proceed**