



MOBILE EQUIPMENT SAFETY

TOOLBOX TALK: Mobile Equipment Safety

RATTLIR Safety Series – "Strike Before It Bites"

Purpose

Mobile equipment, including forklifts, aerial lifts, tractors, UTVs, yard vehicles, and on-road vehicles, introduces significant struck-by, caught-in, rollover, and visibility hazards. This toolbox talk provides an overview of safe operation principles, hazard recognition, and best practices to prevent incidents in industrial and power-generation environments.





MOBILE EQUIPMENT SAFETY

Operator-Related Hazards and Controls

- Only certified and authorized personnel may operate mobile equipment.
- Conduct required pre-use inspections (tires, brakes, horn, lights, hydraulics).
- Maintain full attention – no phones, headphones, or distractions while operating.
- Operate only when seatbelts and guards are in place.
- Use spotters for tight areas, blind corners, or congested work zones.

Load-Related Hazards and Controls

- Verify load weight, balance, and stability before lifting or transporting.
- Keep loads low while traveling to maintain visibility and center of gravity.
- Never exceed rated capacity of forks, baskets, or platforms.
- Secure loads to prevent shifting during movement.
- Avoid lifting personnel unless equipment is rated and designed for that purpose.

Environment-Related Hazards and Controls

- Be aware of plant traffic patterns, pedestrian walkways, and blind zones.
- Adjust speed based on weather, lighting, floor conditions, and congestion.
- Maintain safe distances from edges, drop-offs, ditches, and loading docks.
- Use horns approaching corners, intersections, or doorways.
- Watch for uneven terrain, soft ground, ice, mud, or debris.

Additional Safe Work Practices

- Aerial lift operators must use fall protection where required.
- Never operate equipment under the influence of fatigue, medication, or impairment.
- Chock wheels when parking on slopes or uneven ground.
- Shut down equipment before refueling or recharging batteries.
- Maintain clear communication between operators and spotters at all times.
- Suspend aerial operations when wind speeds exceed the manufacturers specifications or company policy. A common maximum windspeed for crane and aerial lift operation is 25 mph.



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Discussion Questions

- Do you understand how operator, load, and environmental factors influence mobile equipment safety?
- Are you aware of the pedestrian and vehicle traffic patterns in today's work area?
- Do you have the proper training, PPE, and visibility measures in place for operating equipment today?

RATTLIR Takeaway

Mobile equipment hazards develop quickly when operators, loads, or environmental conditions are not fully controlled. By recognizing blind zones, stabilizing loads, and adapting to changing work conditions, we eliminate the hidden risks that lead to serious incidents. RATTLIR strikes before it bites by promoting disciplined operation, clear communication, and full awareness of the surroundings at all times.