FORKLIFT SAFETY

Handling the Load:

Preparation
- Secure the load so it is safely arranged and stable.
- Do not carry damaged merchandise unless it has been secured by wrapping or banding.
- Center the load as nearly as possible.
- Use caution when handling off-center loads that cannot be centered.
- Distribute the heaviest part of the load nearest the front wheels of the forklift.
- Do not overload. Know the stated capacity of your forklift and do not exceed it. Only by keeping within the weight limit can you operate the forklift safely.
- A forklift's capacity is rated for a specified load center. If the load is off-center, improperly distributed, or oversized, it may exceed capacity and unbalance the forklift.
- Use the load extension backrest.

Approaching the Load:
- Approach the load slowly and carefully, stopping 8-12 inches in front of the load.
- Place the truck squarely in front of the load with the forks at the correct height.
- Set the direction control to neutral.
- Do not raise or lower the forks unless the forklift is stopped and the brake is set.

Fork Position
- Level the forks before inserting them into the pallet.
- The forks must be placed under the load as far as possible.
- Slide the forks into the pallet until they are fully under the load. The forks should be at least two-thirds the length of the load.
- Be careful that the forks do not go through to the other side where pallets are closely stacked.
- Center the weight of the load between the forks. Adjust the forks to distribute the weight evenly.
- Tilt the mast back carefully to stabilize the load.

Lifting the Load:
- Check that there is adequate overhead clearance before raising the load.
- Make sure there is sufficient headroom under overhead installations, lights, pipes, etc.
- Carefully lift the load up above the lower stack about 4 inches.
- Lift the load and then tilt the mast back slightly to rest the load against the backrest extension.
- Ensure that the load does not catch on any obstructions.
- Slowly return the lift control lever to the neutral position.

Group Discussion Topics:
- Is your forklift in good condition? (i.e. tires, hydraulic lines, signage, etc.). What are some of the forklift hazards specific to your workplace?