



**THOMPSON & JOHNSON**  
EQUIPMENT CO., INC.

**Think Safe - Be Safe**

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## Can forklifts stop on a dime?

FORKLIFTS DO NOT STOP ON A DIME, IT'S THAT SIMPLE.

THE AVERAGE 5,000 LBS. LIFT CAPACITY FORKLIFT WEIGHS ABOUT 9,000 LBS. UNLOADED. SO, IF YOU ADD A MAXIMUM LOAD ON THE FRONT OF YOUR FORKS YOU HAVE APPROXIMATELY 14,000 LBS OF WEIGHT ROLLING DOWN THE FLOOR AT AROUND 8 MPH.

I'M NO PHYSICIST, BUT THAT MUCH WEIGHT IN MOTION WILL TAKE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF FEET BEFORE IT COMES TO A STOP. IF A FORKLIFT IS MOVING APPROXIMATELY 8 MPH, YOU ARE TRAVELING AROUND 11.75 FEET PER SECOND. THIS MAY NOT SEEM FAST AT ALL IF YOU'RE MOVING DOWN THE HIGHWAY, BUT ON A WAREHOUSE FLOOR THAT'S PRETTY FAST.

LET'S LOOK AT A SCENARIO; FROM OUT BETWEEN MACHINERY OR PRODUCT ON THE FLOOR WALKS A COWORKER INTO THE PATH OF A MOVING FORKLIFT. SO, FROM THE OPERATOR'S VIEW POINT THEY HAVE TWO BLIND SPOTS TO BE CONCERNED WITH: THE RAILS OF THE MAST ON THEIR FORKLIFT WAS ONE, AND THE MACHINERY OR PRODUCT ON THE FLOOR IS ANOTHER BLIND SPOT. BETWEEN THOSE TWO BLIND SPOTS THE OPERATOR MAY NOT SEE THE COWORKER, UNTIL THEY ARE RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE FORKLIFT OPERATOR. AT 8 MPH, THE OPERATOR MUST TAKE ONE SECOND TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DANGER AND DECIDE WHAT TO DO, AND YET ANOTHER SECOND TO REACT TO THAT DECISION. IN JUST TWO SECONDS, THAT TRUCK TRAVELED OVER 23 FEET. THEN, THE LOADED 14,000 LB FORKLIFT MUST TRAVEL FURTHER BEFORE IT CAN COME TO A COMPLETE STOP. THEN THERE'S THE FLOOR CONDITIONS, WET/SLIPPERY FLOORS MEAN EVEN LONGER STOPPING DISTANCES. ALL IN ALL, IT'S NOT A GOOD DAY FOR THE COWORKER IF THEY WERE ONLY 12 FEET AWAY.

BOTTOM LINE, KEEP YOUR SPEED DOWN WHEN TRAVELING WITH A FORKLIFT LOADED OR UNLOADED. OSHA REGULATIONS STATE A MINIMUM OF 3 TRUCK LENGTHS BETWEEN YOU AND THE TRUCK IN FRONT OF YOU. WET/SLIPPERY FLOOR CONDITIONS SHOULD INCREASE THAT DISTANCE EVEN MORE. DRIVERS, ANTICIPATE DANGER, USE YOUR HORN AROUND BLIND SPOTS OR AT END OF AISLE WAYS. BUT MOST OF ALL, SLOW DOWN BECAUSE YOUR FORKLIFT WILL NOT STOP ON A DIME!

IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS, GIVE OUR RESIDENT EXPERT DAVE BENNETT A CALL OR FILL OUT A REQUEST FORM BY CLICKING [HERE](#).



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
PLEASE CONTACT OUR  
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