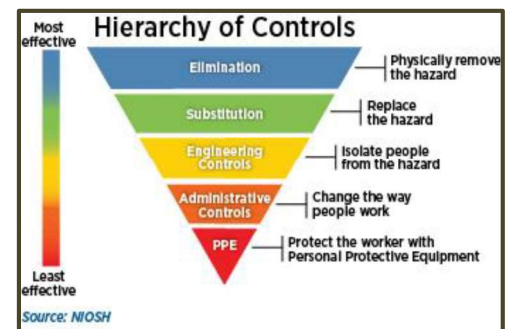


Forklift and Pedestrian Safety

Forklifts have become commonplace in nearly every industry, thanks to their versatility and utility. As employers find more ways to use forklifts in the workplace, there is often a corresponding increase in exposure to pedestrians. With the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) estimate of 19,000 pedestrians being struck by forklifts each year, it is essential that this exposure is recognized and mitigated. Below we will use the Hierarchy of Controls to explore some methods of managing forklift-pedestrian hazards.

Eliminate the Exposure

In examining the Hierarchy of Controls (at right), hazard elimination should always be the first consideration. As such, look for ways to separate forklift and pedestrian traffic whenever possible. Create designated paths of travel for each, avoiding intersection as much as possible. Similarly, design workplaces that separate forklift and pedestrian work areas. For example, keep all material storage and shipping activities in one building/area and all manufacturing, stocking, and office work elsewhere.



Use Technology

Moving down to engineering controls, there are a multitude of technological solutions on the market today to aid in employer's forklift safety efforts. Some examples are: lights that extend in front of or behind the machine to alert pedestrians to its presence, speed limiters that can prevent collisions due to travelling with excessive speed, and pedestrian sensing devices that alert drivers stop movement.

Develop Procedures, Then Train, Train, Train!

There will inevitably be times when forklifts and pedestrians must work in close proximity together. In these situations, take the time to develop thorough procedures and perform Job Safety Analyses on the activity. This allows you to recognize and address hazards before they become an incident. Once you have established your expectations (administrative controls) for these situations, train all affected employees and take steps to ensure comprehension. This can come in the form of auditing, demonstrations, or quizzing. When deficiencies are identified, retraining should occur. Due to the nature and severity of the hazard, regular retraining should be considered regardless of observed deficiencies. Note: this training is in addition to Powered Industrial Truck training required under OSHA.

PPE

Personal protective equipment should always be considered the last line of defense, as it is proven to be the least effective. That said, things like high visibility apparel can be a great addition to a company's other forklift-pedestrian safety efforts!

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