

## FACT SHEET 25

### SPEED AND FORK LIFT TRUCKS

Excessive speed contributes to a significant number of fork lift truck accidents.

Fork lift trucks are not designed to travel at speed. The steering and braking characteristics are different from many other types of vehicle. When used incorrectly, especially if traveling at speed, the truck may become unstable and shed its load, or even turn over.

Questions are often asked about maximum speeds. It is not possible to be specific. Different operations may mean that different limits should be used - 3 mph in racking – 5 mph in transit aisles – 10 mph in the yard. This will vary from business to business and location to location.

The following action may be considered.

- Carry out a risk assessment and determine the maximum speed(s) to be used.
- Communicate this to the operators and use signs where appropriate.
- Ensure the limits are enforced by managers and supervisors.
- Have a sound system of sanctions. (This is such an important issue that a system such as “three strikes and you are out” could be considered.)

There is equipment available that can physically control the speed of fork lift trucks. Some systems will allow different maximum speeds to be established in different zones. Your fork lift truck service provider, or supplier, should be able to help further with this.

There is one final aspect to consider. If other employees think that the fork lift trucks are being driven too fast – they probably are. Everyone should feel comfortable and safe.

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The information in this Fact Sheet has been assembled and interpreted to give truck owners and users basic guidance on frequently asked questions. Further important information will be given in the quoted reference documents. Responsibility for meeting the safety obligations discussed rests with the employer, and the FLTA will not accept liability for any problem arising as a result of the content of this document. **Technical Bulletins, containing more detailed information and updated as appropriate, are made available free to members of the [FLTA SAFE USER GROUP](#).**

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