

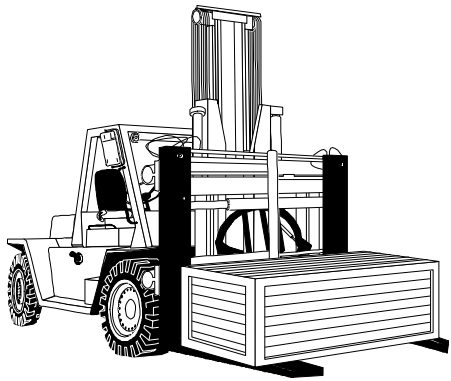
---

## Forklift Fatalities in Illinois

---

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) monitors, with verification, all fatal work injuries, collecting information on the circumstances of the injury and characteristics of the decedent. Information on the circumstances of the injury includes, among other things, the source of the injury. Source of injury identifies the object, substance, bodily motion, or exposure that directly produced or inflicted the injury. Since powered industrial trucks, or forklifts, are an integral part of the operation of many businesses in diverse industries, there is always the potential for occupational injuries caused by the operation of this equipment. The CFOI source category of forklift classifies self-propelled industrial vehicles used for hoisting and transporting heavy objects by inserting steel girders or a solid platform

There are presently approximately 822,830 powered industrial trucks in use in American industry, with an average of 1.5 operators per truck. Nationally, powered industrial trucks cause approximately 85 fatalities and 34,900 serious injuries each year. The following are findings from the Illinois Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries.



- ▶ From 1992-1996, Illinois workers experienced 20 forklift fatalities.
- ▶ Most forklift fatalities occurred in January, June, and November with 15 percent each (n = 3). No forklift fatalities occurred in May, August, and December.
- ▶ Forty percent of all forklift fatalities occurred on Monday (n = 8) and 25 percent occurred on Tuesday (n = 5). No forklift fatalities occurred on Saturday.
- ▶ Forty-five percent of the forklift fatalities occurred between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:59 p.m. (n = 9), while 40 percent occurred between 5:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. (n = 8).
- ▶ Workers 25 to 34 years of age experienced the most forklift fatalities with 30 percent (n = 6), followed by workers 20 to 24 years of age and 55 to 64 years of age with 20 percent each (n = 4).
- ▶ The industry with the highest number of forklift fatalities was manufacturing with 65 percent (n = 13), followed by transportation with 15 percent (n = 3).
- ▶ The occupation with the highest number of forklift fatalities was operators, fabricators, and laborers with 75 percent (n = 15), followed by precision production, craft and repair occupations with 20 percent (n = 4).
- ▶ Fifty percent of all forklift fatalities were a result of the forklift overturning on the employee (n=10). Of these overturns, 30 percent occurred while the forklift was backing up (n=3).

Although forklift deaths represented less than 2 percent of the total occupational fatalities in Illinois for 1992-1996, these deaths were largely preventable by using preventive safety procedures. Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA) has developed a proposed revision to regulation 1910.178 at the request of the Industrial Truck Association to require operator training for all industrial powered trucks and to provide guidelines for this training. At the present time, this revision is merely a proposal. However, the proposed training guidelines are still important and should be adopted to protect the safety of powered industrial truck operators, whether required by OSHA regulations or not.