

SAFETY BLITZ BUCKLED

OR



ALLIANCE INTERSTATE RISK
SERVICE



ATA COMP FUND

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS (PIT) /FORKLIFTS

MYTH: SEATBELTS ARE NOT NEEDED FOR PITS/FORKLIFTS

A PIT of some kind, often a forklift, is almost always present in cargo operations, warehouses, terminals, auto shops, loading docks, etc. Some Commercial Motor Vehicles (CMVs) even carry their own PIT, called a **moffett**. The myth that a seatbelt is not needed - or even required - is most certainly **FALSE**; however, the reason a seatbelt is used for forklifts is often different than for regular vehicles or CMVs.



- Like other vehicles, forklifts come equipped with seatbelts, but their purpose is a bit different. Forklift safety belts are designed to **prevent drivers from jumping out of the PIT** if it tips over.
- Many injuries and fatalities occur when operators get crushed between the PIT and the ground as they try to jump.
- If employees do not use the seatbelt or restraint, OSHA can cite the employer for failure to comply with regulations - **resulting in a hefty penalty fee**.
- PIT accidents happen. The most common type is flipping the "truck", trapping and crushing the operator. In fact, **over 50%** of forklift accidents involve overturned PITs. Safety belts are proven to reduce injuries resulting from flips, and the safest spot to be is in the seat **with** the seatbelt fastened.
- The main cause of fatalities from PIT tip-overs is because the operator **falls from or attempts to jump from** the tipping forklift. When a worker is caught underneath a PIT, the weight of the machine (average 9,000lbs) can liquefy or splinter a limb and render it inoperable at best, or fatally crush the worker at worst.
- OSHA records indicate **80-100 PIT fatalities** annually. Approximately half of those deaths occur due to the PIT drivers being crushed from tipped-over equipment.

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During a PIT tip-over, an operator should never jump from the lift. Instead, the worker must follow these steps to reduce the risk of a serious accident or injury:

- Keep both hands on the steering wheel while bracing for the tip-over.
- Press both feet into the floor of the lift to brace and minimize movement.
- Lean away from the impact.