



TDCJ Risk Management's Training Circular

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November SAFE DRIVING



If there is one overall theme for driver safety, it is preparedness. You should inspect your vehicle before starting the engine and you should plan your trip before hitting the highway. You will find it helpful and refreshing to warm up your body before sitting in the driver's seat because your body and mind can become stressed when driving.



Forklift Safety

- Watch where you place your hands and feet. Be aware of and stay clear of pinch points, such as the wheels and lift gears.
- Stay under the overhead guard. Keep your hands and feet inside the forklift.
- If your forklift starts to tip over, DO NOT JUMP! Stay in your seat, grip the wheel securely and brace yourself with your feet.
- Always look out for others when moving and operating your forklift.
- When operating the forklift watch out for pedestrians, blind intersections, and drive slowly.
- When the forks are raised, never walk or stand under them.
- Do not allow anyone to ride with you on a forklift unless it is made for more than one person.
- Forklifts are not elevators. Do not lift anyone unless you are using a special basket.
- Fluids from a forklift can leak out overnight on the area where you park it and make the surface slick. Check for fluids when you get on and off a forklift to prevent a slip and fall. Absorbent mats are available to park forklifts on and will absorb any leaks.
- Do not let unauthorized persons operate your forklift, and remove the key when unattended.
- Use your horn when backing up, at intersections, when going through doors, and anywhere you have limited or blocked vision.
- Use your seat belt and check that the warning lights and backup alarm works before operating the machine.
- Remember that you are the most important safety device on a forklift.
- Move the load slowly to ensure safety in case your surroundings change.
- You should always push the load (never pull the load).
- When going down on an incline, go in reverse.
- Be wary of pinch points to avoid injuries to your hands.
- If you are carrying a large load that obstructs your view, ask a co-worker to guide you.
- Stick to correct sides of the warehouse.

Tractor Safety

- Know your tractor and how to use it safely.
- Prepare for tractor work by inspecting the vehicle and wearing appropriate clothing.
- Never allow riders. A tractor should have only one person on board.
- Ensure all operators are properly trained in tractor operations.
- Install an approved roll-over protective structure and seatbelt on any tractor that is not equipped with these features.

Pallet Jack Safety

- Never place your feet under a machine.
- Safety-toed (steel toe) footwear will prevent foot injuries caused by being run over by the wheels or hit by materials falling from the jack.
- Never exceed the advised capacity.
- Use proper lifting techniques when loading/unloading and operating the pallet jack.

- Disengage drive and turn off engine before leaving the tractor unattended.
- Keep yourself and others away from moving parts.
- Watch where you are going at all times. Avoid obstacles, ditches, embankments, and holes.



- Slow down when turning, crossing slopes, or driving on rough, slick, or muddy surfaces.
- Backing up an incline is safest.
- Apply power slowly when pulling a load.
- Use front end weights to stabilize heavy hauling loads.
- Start slowly and change gears carefully.

Lift Safety

Properly inspect all components of the lift to ensure safe operation conditions, and check to make sure all components of the lift follow the manufacturer's recommendations. Inspect your work area and clear away all hazards before operating the lift.

- Use a body harness or restraining belt with a lanyard attached to the basket to prevent being ejected or pulled from the basket;
- Make sure you are properly trained on the operation of the lift before using the equipment;
- Drop-offs, holes, or unstable surfaces such as loose dirt;
- Inadequate ceiling heights;
- Slopes, ditches, or bumps;
- Other overhead obstructions;
- Be aware of high wind and other severe weather conditions:

- The presence of others in close proximity to the work.
- Do not position aerial lifts between overhead hazards if possible.
- Treat all overhead power lines and communication cables as energized, and stay at least 10 feet away.
- Set outriggers on pads, or on a level surface.
- Set brakes when outriggers are used.
- Use wheel chocks on sloped surfaces when it is safe to do so.
- Use spotters when moving lifts.
- Set up work zone warnings, such as cones and signs, when necessary to warn others. Ensure that the power utility or power line workers de-energize power lines in the vicinity of the work.

Seatbelt Laws In Texas

All passengers and drivers of vehicles in Texas must use a seatbelt, if available. Failure to do so can result in fines for both the passenger and driver. These fines include:

- Driving a vehicle without a seatbelt: Up to \$200.
- Passengers 15- years old or older, riding without a seat belt: \$25-\$50.
- Passengers under 17-years old riding without a seat belt: \$100-\$200 (fine assessed to driver).
- Children under 18-years old riding in an open-bed pickup or open flatbed truck: \$25-\$200 (fine assessed to driver).

Reporting Drunk

Drivers

Use the following as a guide to assess whether someone is driving while intoxicated.

Problems maintaining proper lane position:

- Weaving and swerving across lanes.
- Problems with staying in the lane.
- Drifting off the road.

Speed and braking problems:

- Braking too late or too early.
- Accelerating or slowing down for no reason.
- Driving noticeably slower than the speed limit

Vigilance problems:

- Driving in the wrong lane.
- Delayed or no reaction to traffic signals.
- Failure to use headlights at night.
- Inability to signal properly.

Drunk Driving Laws

If you are under 21 years old, it is illegal to have any amount of alcohol in your system while driving. DWI charges for minors include fines, community service, license suspension and attendance at alcohol awareness classes.

If you are found guilty of a DWI in Texas, you can face the following:

- A fine of up to \$2,000.
- 3 days to 180 days imprisonment.
- Loss of your driver's license for up to one year.
- A fee of up to \$2,000 per year, for 3 years, to keep your driver's license.
- TDCJ policy PD-22 states Use of Alcohol or Illicit Drugs on the job is a rule 19 level one violation and can result in dismissal.
- Conviction of a misdemeanor is a rule 39 level three violation and can also lead to disciplinary action to include dismissal. (PD-22)

Cell Phone Use on Texas Roads

Texas law prohibits the use of cell phones while driving if you:

- Have had a learner's permit for 6-months or less.
- Are under 18 years of age.
- Operate a school bus when children are present.
- Are in a school crossing zone



Texting and Driving

Five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55 mph, that is enough time to cover the length of a football field.

Reaching for a phone, dialing, texting, and other uses of portable devices increases the risk of getting into a crash by three times.

Emotions Affect Driving

If you are angry, upset or otherwise annoyed, whether due to something unrelated to driving, or because of a driving incident, pull over or off the road. Take a few moments to close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and relax. If emotions are particularly strong, take a short walk, or go get something to drink (non-alcoholic, of course); just stay off the road until you have had time to settle down. If you find yourself drifting into worry, depression, or if you are thinking too closely about something that has happened, make a concerted effort to put it out of your mind until you stop the car.

Night Driving Safety Tips

One problem is vision. Almost 90% of a driver's reaction depends on it. Without the favor of sunlight, depth perception, peripheral vision, and color recognition plummet, demanding more sharpened focus at a time when weariness begins to weigh on the eyes.

Keep headlights on one hour before dusk and one hour after dawn to increase your vehicle's visibility.

Use low beams when driving through fog.

Be extra alert when driving at night and on weekends.

Drunk-driver-related car fatalities are at their highest on Friday and Saturday nights.

If your car fails, pull it off the road as far as possible. Turn on emergency lights and the inner dome light and do not wander.

Stay in the car until assistance arrives.

Driving in Hazardous Conditions

Driving your vehicle in hazardous conditions such as snow, heavy rain, or thick fog, is a matter of preparation, practice, and as always, drive calm. With the oils and exhaust that accumulate on highways, only a small amount of precipitation can cause the roadway to become slick, hindering your ability to control and stop the vehicle. A fog bank or dust storm can suddenly reduce your visibility to zero.

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Risk Management

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