

Forklift spotters are typically used when the forklift operator does not have full view of the working area, the path of travel, and potential hazards along the travel route.

Responsibilities of a forklift spotter may include:

- Ensuring the forklift does not hit anyone or anything
- Paying attention to the positioning of a load on the forks during lift and lower
- Confirming the load is balanced and not in danger of tipping
- Watching for hazards along the forklift's travel path
- Directing the travel route when the forklift operator's view is limited
- Keeping pedestrians out of the danger zone of the forklift



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The forklift spotter should be positioned in such a way that they have a clear view of the areas the forklift operator cannot see and at the same time not be in harm's way.

- Forklift spotters should wear high-visibility clothing, like a reflective safety vest.
- Forklift spotters typically use hand signals because voice signals may not be heard or can be easily misunderstood, especially if there is noise on the job site.
- Use a two-way radio if the forklift driver cannot see the spotter or hear verbal signals.

There is not a set of universally recognized forklift spotter hand signals.

- Whether you are the forklift operator, or the forklift spotter, ensure that you agree on and understand the set of signals that will be used during the operation.
- It is best if everyone on the job site uses the same set of hand signals so there is not confusion during complicated maneuvers.

While acting as a forklift spotter:

- Use large arm and hand movements that are easy to understand.
  - Keep a safe distance from the forklift you are guiding.
  - When possible, stand to the side and rear (or front) of the forklift (driver's side is best).
  - If possible, avoid walking backwards while giving the signals – if you are walking, you need to see where you are going.
  - Maintain continuous visual contact with the forklift operator.
  - Do not become positioned between the forklift and a fixed object.
  - Stay out of the forklift's path of travel.
  - Allow enough stopping distance and clearance.
- Acting as a forklift spotter requires your full concentration. Do not perform any other duties while you are acting as a spotter. Do not look at a cell phone, wear headphones, chat with a co-worker, or do anything else that could pose a distraction while you are directing the movement of a forklift.

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