

A forklift spotter, while on the ground, helps the forklift operator navigate safely.

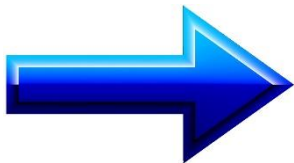
- Forklift spotters are typically used when the forklift operator does not have full view of the working area, the path of travel, and potential hazards along the travel route.

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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Spotters and forklift operators must work together, and both must be completely focused on the task, while the forklift is in motion.

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.

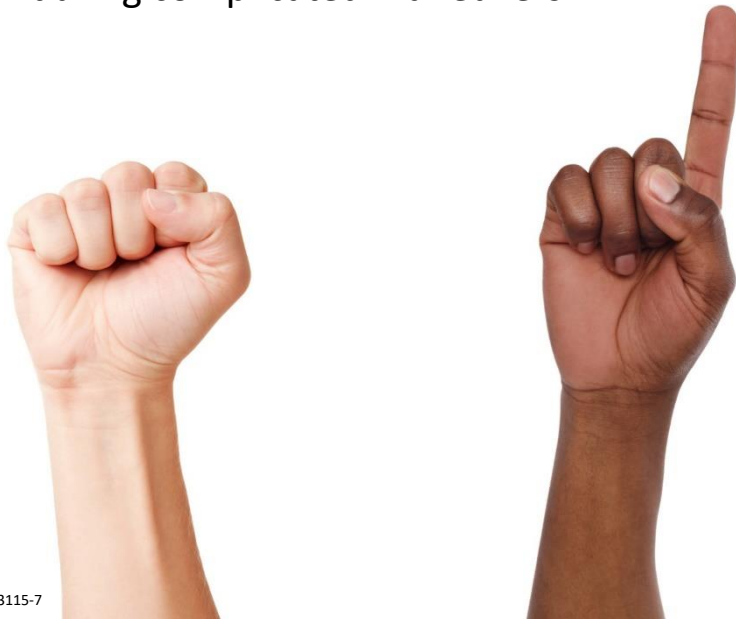
- Forklift spotters should wear high-visibility clothing, like a reflective safety vest.
- Forklift spotters typically use hand signals because voice signals may not be heard or can be easily misunderstood, especially if there is noise on the job site.
- Use a two-way radio if the forklift driver cannot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

Forklift spotter hand signals include:

- Turn Right, Turn Left
- Move Forward, Move Backwards
- Raise the Load, Lower the Load
- Spread the Forks, Close the Forks
- Tilt Mast Back, Tilt Mast Forward
- Stop





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While acting as a forklift spotter:

- Give signals to only one person, the driver.
- 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.

- Continue to signal even when the forklift's maneuver is the same or is proceeding normally and safely. Keep your hands up and keep the proper signal going throughout the movement.
- 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.

Together, the spotter and the forklift operator should:

- agree on hand signals or verbal commands
- know the forklift operator's blind spots
- discuss the plan for getting the forklift where it needs to go including positioning and planned movement of the forklift
- survey the area surrounding the forklift and along the path of travel for potential hazards

Both the spotter, and the forklift operator, should be aware of common blind spots.

- On a forklift, there can be blind spots for the operator to the sides and rear of the forklift.
- There will also be a blind spot in front of any load the forklift is carrying.



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IMPORTANT

If the spotter cannot find a safe place to stand while giving signals, stop the move. Talk to the forklift operator about how to re-organize the move in a way that will allow the spotter to stand in a safe location.



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As a forklift operator, if you have limited visibility or are unsure about clearance, do not move the forklift without a spotter.

Forklift operators, even when using a spotter, are still responsible for the safe operation of the forklift.

- Remove all distractions, don't look at your cellphone, and focus on the spotter's signals.
- Walk around the forklift and remove any hazards.
- Always keep the spotter in view. If you lose sight of the spotter, stop the forklift immediately.
- Never attempt to guess what the spotter is trying to communicate. If you aren't sure, stop the forklift, park safely, and come to an agreement on the hand signals with the spotter.
- Move the forklift slowly and in a controlled manner.
- If the spotter needs to stop signaling momentarily, for any reason, stop the forklift. Resume the maneuver only after the spotter is again fully focused and the signaling is resumed.

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