
High Visibility Clothing Requirements For Yard Forklift Operations

1.0 Objective & Intent

The objective of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish mandatory high visibility clothing requirements for all personnel working in or near yard areas where forklifts are operated. This procedure is designed to mitigate the risk of struck-by incidents, which are a leading cause of serious injury and fatality in industrial environments. Compliance with WorkSafeBC regulations, specifically Part 8 (Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment) and Part 12 (Tools, Machinery and Equipment), is mandatory. This SOP ensures that every individual in the yard is visually conspicuous to forklift operators, reducing the potential for collisions and near-misses.

2.0 Operational Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, contractors, visitors, and delivery personnel entering any outdoor yard area, loading docks, material storage zones, and travel paths where forklifts are operated. It covers all shifts and operational hours, including periods of low light, fog, rain, or darkness. The scope includes all forklift types used in the yard, including propane, electric, and diesel units, regardless of load capacity. This SOP does not apply to indoor production areas where separate traffic management plans are in effect.

3.0 Hazard Identification & Mandatory PPE

- Struck-by Hazard: Being hit by a moving forklift due to low visibility or operator blind spots.
- Crush Hazard: Being pinned between a forklift and a fixed object (e.g., racking, wall, trailer).
- Environmental Conditions: Reduced visibility due to rain, fog, dust, or darkness increasing the risk of operator not seeing pedestrians.
- Distraction Hazard: Pedestrians wearing dark or non-reflective clothing blending into the background.
- Mandatory PPE: CSA Z96-15 Class 2 or Class 3 high visibility safety vest with reflective striping (must be worn over all outer clothing).
- Mandatory PPE: High visibility pants or leg bands (if wearing dark pants) to ensure full 360-degree conspicuity.
- Mandatory PPE: CSA-approved steel-toed boots with slip-resistant soles.
- Mandatory PPE: Hard hat with high visibility decal or reflective strip (if working near overhead loads).
- Mandatory PPE: ANSI/ISEA 107-2015 compliant high visibility rain gear if precipitation is present.

4.0 Required Safety Equipment & Tools

- CSA Z96-15 Class 2 or Class 3 high visibility safety vest (with reflective tape on front, back, and sides).
- High visibility pants or reflective leg bands (for full lower body visibility).
- High visibility rain jacket or poncho (ANSI/ISEA 107 compliant) for wet conditions.
- Hard hat with reflective decal or high visibility shell (optional but recommended).
- Personal flashlight or headlamp (for low-light or night operations).
- Yard safety signage indicating high visibility zone and pedestrian walkways.
- Forklift operator pre-shift inspection checklist (to verify horn, lights, and backup alarm function).

5.0 Step-by-Step Safety Procedure

1. Before entering the yard, verify that you are wearing a CSA Z96-15 Class 2 or Class 3 high visibility vest over all outer clothing. Ensure the vest is not torn, faded, or missing reflective strips. If the vest is damaged, do not enter the yard and obtain a replacement from the safety station.
2. Inspect your high visibility pants or leg bands to confirm they are clean and reflective. Dark pants without reflective material are not permitted in the yard. If wearing dark pants, attach reflective leg bands above the ankle.
3. Check that your CSA-approved steel-toed boots are laced securely and free of mud or debris that could reduce traction. Slip-resistant soles are mandatory for yard surfaces.
4. If working during low-light conditions (dusk, dawn, night, or heavy overcast), activate your personal flashlight or headlamp and ensure it is visible from all angles. Notify the yard supervisor if additional lighting is needed.
5. Before any forklift movement begins, confirm that the forklift operator has completed a pre-shift inspection, including verification that the horn, headlights, and backup alarm are functional. If any equipment is defective, do not proceed and report it immediately.
6. When walking in the yard, always use designated pedestrian walkways marked with painted lines or barriers. Never walk between parked vehicles or trailers. Maintain eye contact with forklift operators and ensure they acknowledge your presence before crossing their path.
7. If you must work in an area where a forklift is operating, establish a communication protocol with the operator (e.g., hand signals, radio, or verbal confirmation). Never assume the operator has seen you. If the operator cannot see you, move to a safe location and wait until the path is clear.
8. In the event of rain, fog, or dust, immediately don high visibility rain gear or a reflective poncho. Standard vests may not be sufficient in reduced visibility. If visibility drops below 50 meters, cease all pedestrian movement in the yard and seek shelter until conditions improve.
9. At the end of your shift, remove your high visibility clothing and inspect it for damage. Report any tears, fading, or missing reflective strips to the safety supervisor. Store the vest in a clean, dry location away from direct sunlight to prolong its reflective life.
10. If you observe any individual in the yard without proper high visibility clothing, stop work immediately and notify the safety supervisor. Do not allow the individual to remain in the yard until they are properly equipped. Document the incident in the safety log.

Regulatory Disclaimer: This document is a generic safety template provided for educational and informational purposes only. It does not constitute professional engineering, legal, or regulatory compliance advice. The end-user assumes all liability for validating all safety protocols against specific machinery manufacturer manuals and local occupational health and safety regulations (e.g., WorkSafeBC, CSA standards) before deployment.