

Safety Tips

PROPANE SAFETY

REFUELING YOUR FORKLIFT

Forklifts may be powered by gasoline, diesel fuel, batteries or propane (in the form of liquefied petroleum gas or LPG). You may refuel a propane-powered forklift either by refilling the forklift's propane tanks from a larger supply tank or simply by exchanging empty tanks for full ones. Either way, this can be a hazardous operation, so it's wise to take some safety precautions.

PROPERTIES OF PROPANE

Propane normally occurs as a colorless gas, so its temperature must be greatly lowered for it to condense into a liquid. Liquid propane is therefore extremely cold. If it splashes in your eye it can freeze your eyeball, blinding you. Because liquid propane is heavier than air it can settle on the floor. Such leaks are fire hazards until the gas evaporates. And confined propane gas can explode if ignited by a spark, electric arc or open flame.

HOW TO PREVENT REFUELING ACCIDENTS

Wear personal protective equipment (PPE), including splash-protection goggles and gloves and keep your shirt sleeves rolled down. Always follow the forklift manufacturer's and your company's recommended procedures for refueling. Refuel outdoors if possible. In any case, refuel only in assigned ventilated areas that have fire extinguishers and spill containment and cleanup equipment.

Before exchanging fuel containers run the engine to make sure all the system's fuel has been used. When the fuel tanks are empty, shut off the fuel supply, turn off the ignition and set the brake. If a forklift has been out of use for an extended period, close the hand valve and make sure that the fuel system is dry. Connect the fuel tank to the supply tank only if no fuel is escaping from the connecting point. When refueling be careful not to spill or splash fuel.

Once the fuel tanks are full, never use an open flame to check the fuel level. Before starting the forklift motor, check for fuel leaks. If you see any, or if the forklift won't start after refueling, have a mechanic examine its fuel system. Clean up any leaks and cap the tank. In such cases, start the refueled forklift only after the mechanic gives you the go ahead.



Did you know propane leaks can cause carbon monoxide poisoning?

