

KHASHAN LAW FIRM, APC

FORKLIFT ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

What Warehouse Workers and Their Families Need to Know About Forklift Accidents, Workers' Compensation, and Legal Options

INSIDE:

- **How Forklift Accidents Happen**
- **Injury & Fatality Statistics Every Worker Should Know**
- **What to Do If You're Hurt in a Forklift Accident**
- **How an Attorney Can Help With Your Claim**

**A forklift is one of the most powerful tools in a warehouse —
and one of the most dangerous when things go wrong.**



FORKLIFT INJURY GUIDE - 2026

Khashan Law Firm, APC • Workers' Compensation & Personal Injury Attorneys • Inland Empire, CA

This guide is for general educational purposes and is provided as a public service by Khashan Law Firm. It is not a substitute for individualized legal advice

FORKLIFT ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

How Forklift Accidents Happen

Forklifts help workers move heavy loads quickly and with far less physical strain than manual lifting. But these machines are powerful, and when they are poorly maintained, undertrained operators are behind the wheel, or safety procedures are ignored, the results can be devastating.

Common Ways Forklift Accidents Occur

- **Tip-overs.** Forklifts are rear-heavy to balance a loaded front end. This makes them prone to tipping during tight turns, on uneven surfaces, or when overloaded.
- **Struck-by incidents.** A worker on foot is hit or crushed because the operator did not see them, or a load shifted unexpectedly.
- **Falls from loading docks.** A forklift rolls too close to the edge of a dock and falls to the level below, often causing severe injury to the operator.
- **Crush injuries.** A worker is pinned between the forklift and a rack, wall, or another vehicle, or an arm or hand is caught in the lift mechanism.
- **Falling loads.** Poorly stacked or overloaded pallets fall from an elevated position onto workers below.
- **Unauthorized riders.** Someone other than the trained operator rides on the forklift or an improvised platform and is seriously injured in a fall or collision.

Contributing Factors Employers Are Responsible For

- Lack of proper operator training and certification
- Poorly maintained brakes, forks, or lift mechanisms
- Inadequate warehouse layout, blind corners, or missing mirrors
- Understaffed safety programs and rushed production quotas
- Failure to enforce pedestrian aisles and traffic rules
- Allowing unauthorized personnel to operate or ride on equipment

Injury & Fatality Facts Every Warehouse Worker Should Know

- Forklift overturns, workers struck by forklifts, and falls from forklifts are among the most common causes of forklift-related deaths nationally.
- Although forklifts are involved in a relatively small share of all warehouse accidents, those accidents tend to be far more severe than other workplace incidents.
- A loaded forklift can weigh several tons — several times heavier than a typical car — and often has brakes only on the front wheels, making it harder to stop quickly.
- Regulators have long identified stronger training and safety programs as one of the most effective ways to prevent forklift accidents.

FORKLIFT ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

What to Do If You're Hurt in a Forklift Accident

Immediate Steps

- **Get medical help right away.** Forklift accidents can cause internal injuries, fractures, and crush injuries that are not always obvious right away.
- **Report the accident.** California law requires you to notify your employer within 30 days, but reporting immediately protects your claim.
- **Preserve the scene.** If you are able, take photos of the forklift, the load, the surrounding area, and any visible injuries before things are moved or cleaned up.
- **Get witness information.** Coworkers who saw what happened can be critical if your claim is disputed later.
- **Request the incident report.** Ask for a copy of any internal accident report your employer completes.
- **Be cautious with the insurance company.** You are not required to give a recorded statement before speaking with an attorney.

Your Rights Under California Workers' Compensation Law

If you're injured operating a forklift, working near one, or struck by one, you may be entitled to benefits regardless of fault, including:

- Medical care reasonably required to treat the injury
- Temporary disability payments while you're unable to work
- Permanent disability benefits if you don't fully recover
- Supplemental job displacement (retraining) benefits if you can't return to your prior job
- Death benefits for dependents in the event of a fatal accident

You May Have Options Beyond Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation generally prevents you from suing your own employer, but forklift accidents often involve other parties who may bear legal responsibility, including:

- The manufacturer of a defective forklift or safety mechanism
- A maintenance or repair company that serviced the equipment
- A driver, contractor, or another company operating on a shared worksite
- A property owner responsible for unsafe loading dock or warehouse conditions

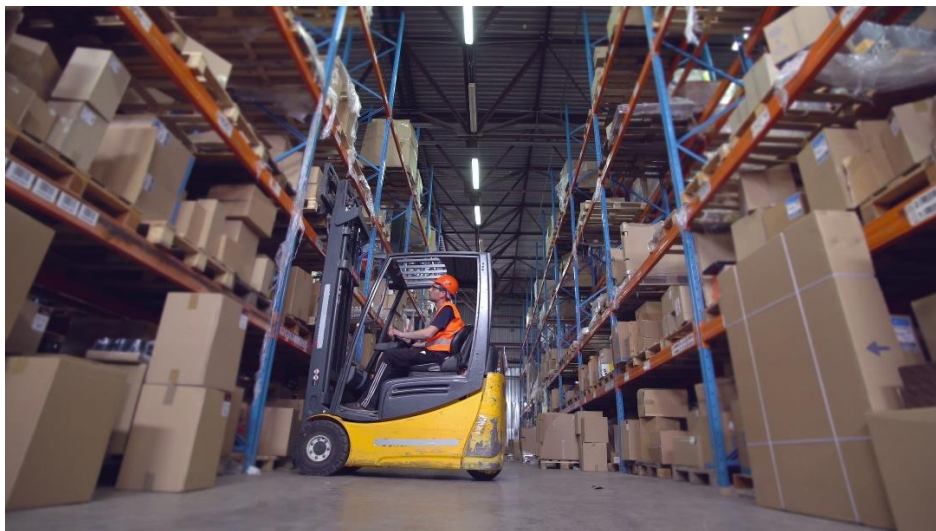
These third-party claims can allow for compensation beyond what workers' compensation provides, including for pain and suffering.

FORKLIFT ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

How Khashan Law Firm Can Help

Forklift accidents are among the most serious injuries warehouse workers face. Fractures, crush injuries, spinal cord damage, and traumatic brain injuries are common — and so is the pressure to accept a quick, low settlement while you're still recovering. Here is how having an experienced attorney on your side can make a difference:

- **Investigating how the accident happened.** We look into forklift maintenance records, training logs, and workplace conditions to understand the full picture — not just what the incident report says.
- **Identifying every responsible party.** Beyond your employer, that can include equipment manufacturers, maintenance contractors, or other companies on a shared job site.
- **Managing your workers' compensation claim.** We handle deadlines, paperwork, and communication with the insurance company so you can focus on recovering.
- **Connecting you with qualified medical care.** A thorough evaluation is essential, especially for injuries like crush trauma or head injuries that can worsen if downplayed.
- **Pushing back on lowball settlement offers.** We negotiate directly with insurers and, when necessary, take disputes before the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board or pursue a third-party claim in court.
- **Protecting you from retaliation.** If you're disciplined or terminated for reporting a forklift accident, you may have additional legal claims against your employer.
- **Supporting families after a fatal accident.** We help surviving family members pursue the death benefits and, where applicable, wrongful death claims they are entitled to.
- **No upfront cost.** Forklift injury cases are typically handled on a contingency basis — you pay nothing unless we recover compensation for you.



A serious forklift accident can change your life in an instant.
You don't have to navigate the claims process alone.

FORKLIFT ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

Talk to Khashan Law Firm About Your Case

If you or a family member has been hurt — or worse — in a forklift accident at a warehouse, distribution center, farm, or job site, Khashan Law Firm offers free, confidential consultations to help you understand your options.

- ▶ **Call: (951) 461-2387**
- ▶ **Toll-Free: (866) 34-INJURED**
- ▶ **Office:** 746 N. Mountain Ave. Ontario, CA 91762 / 26636 Margarita Rd, Suite 101, Murrieta, CA 92563
- ▶ **Serving:** The Inland Empire, and clients throughout California
- ▶ ***Hablamos Español.***

Additional Resources

- **California Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC):** www.dir.ca.gov/dwc — information on filing claims and your rights as an injured worker.
- **Cal/OSHA:** enforces powered industrial truck (forklift) safety standards and investigates workplace complaints; complaints are confidential.
- **Federal OSHA Powered Industrial Trucks Standard:** www.osha.gov — training and operating requirements for forklifts.
- **NIOSH:** www.cdc.gov/niosh — research and prevention resources on forklift and warehouse safety.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Can I still file a claim if I wasn't the forklift operator?** Yes. Pedestrians and coworkers struck or injured by a forklift are entitled to the same workers' compensation protections.
- **What if my employer says I wasn't following procedure?** California workers' compensation generally covers injuries regardless of fault. An attorney can help address disputes over how an accident happened.
- **Can I pursue a claim if a coworker was operating the forklift?** Yes, workers' compensation covers injuries caused by coworkers in the course of employment, and a separate claim may be possible if another company or piece of equipment was involved.
- **How much does it cost to hire an attorney?** Consultations are free, and fees are typically paid only out of benefits or compensation recovered, subject to applicable approval.

Call Khashan Law Firm as soon as possible. The clock is ticking on your claim and we are here to help!

Estamos aqui para ayudarle con su reclamación de Workers' Comp en su trabajo. Llámenos hoy!

This publication is provided by Khashan Law Firm, APC as a general educational resource for warehouse and industrial workers in California. It is attorney advertising and is not intended as legal advice for any specific situation. Past results do not guarantee future outcomes. Consult a licensed attorney about the facts of your individual case.

© 2026 Khashan Law Firm, APC. This publication may be shared in its entirety for educational use.