Understanding a forklift's load capacity

What is the problem?
A forklift's load capacity is the maximum weight it can safely carry at a specified load centre. The load capacity is at risk of being exceeded when a worker:

- lacks understanding about the effects of a load's weight, shape and size on a forklift
- lacks understanding about the correct way the load should be lifted
- shifts a load without knowing the forklift capacity or the weight of the load
- drives a forklift with a raised load
- mistakenly refers to a model number on the forklift instead of the forklift's load capacity plate.

What are the risks?
Forklift operators and pedestrians are at risk of serious crush injuries caused by rollover, collision or falling loads if the load capacity is exceeded.

What is a solution to the problem?

- Know the maximum load the forklift can lift at a 600 mm load centre when the mast is vertical and tilted forward.
- Use load capacity plates that detail the load each forklift can safely lift.
- Use marked weight, a weight gauge or a scale to weigh loads and to ensure they do not exceed the forklift's load capacity at a given load centre.
- Train operators to use the load capacity plate and not to assume the forklift's capacity.
- Ensure load capacity plates and other instructions on the forklift are maintained and easy to read.
- Ensure information (such as work procedures) are easy to understand and follow (pictures may be useful).

Further information
For further information, call 1300 362 128 or visit worksafe.qld.gov.au

More information about forklift safety is available in *Forklift safety – reducing the risks*.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland www.worksafe.qld.gov.au **1300 362 128**