Key Takeaways from New Citation Data for Forklift Requirements

OSHA Standards 1910.178 sets out the requirements for forklift compliance. As a part of our annual review of the most recent OSHA citation data, here are some key takeaways to help focus you on key compliance issues. This data are for lumber yards unless specifically stated otherwise, for example, for home centers or hardware stores. The assessment for each citation as well as the final penalty can vary for violations of the same standard depending on other circumstances, such as if it is a repeat violation or if it is associated with violations of other standards. By their very nature, some violations, such as traveling violations, must be observed by an OSHA inspector or reported to an inspector.

Two Easy Fixes

1910.178(a)(6). The user shall see that all nameplates and markings are in place and are maintained in a legible condition. The initial citation of $2,000 was negotiated to $1,500.

1910.178(k)(1). The brakes of highway trucks shall be set and wheel chocks placed under the rear wheels to prevent the trucks from rolling while they are boarded with powered industrial trucks. The initial citation of $1,000 was negotiated to $650.

Traveling violations. If OSHA can observe these, you can too!

1910.178(n)(4). The driver shall be required to slow down and sound the horn at cross aisles and other locations where vision is obstructed. If the load being carried obstructs forward view, the driver shall be required to travel with the load trailing. An initial citation at a hardware store was $12,675 with the final penalty negotiated to $3,800.

1910.178(n)(6). The driver shall be required to look in the direction of, and keep a clear view of the path of travel. An initial citation at a hardware store was $12,675 with the final penalty negotiated to $7,605.

1910.178(n)(7). Grades shall be ascended or descended slowly: (i) When ascending or descending grades in excess of 10 percent, loaded trucks shall be driven with the load upgrade; and (iii) On all grades the load and load engaging means shall be tilted back if applicable, and raised only as far as necessary to clear the road surface. The initial citation of $2,400 was negotiated to $1,680.

1910.178(n)(15). While negotiating turns, speed shall be reduced to a safe level by means of turning the hand steering wheel in a smooth, sweeping motion. Except when maneuvering at a very low speed, the hand steering wheel shall be turned at a moderate, even rate. An initial citation at a hardware store was $12,675 with the final penalty negotiated to $2,500.
1910.178(o)(2). Only loads within the rated capacity of the truck shall be handled. The initial citation of $9,053 was negotiated to $6,337. A serious violation at a home center was cited $25,000 and was not negotiated down.

A home center was cited $10,864 and negotiated the final penalty to $7,500 for violation of 1910.178(o)(1). Only stable or safely arranged loads shall be handled. Caution shall be exercised when handling off-center loads which cannot be centered.

**Inspections – Another easy fix!**

1910.178(p)(1). If at any time a powered industrial truck is found to be in need of repair, defective, or in any way unsafe, the truck shall be taken out of service until it has been restored to safe operating condition. Initial citations averaging $4,565 were negotiated to penalties averaging $3,615. Violations of this standard may be considered serious and subject to higher penalties. Citations for home centers averaged $375, while citations for hardware stores averaged $4,808 and $4,623 for final penalties.

1910.178(q)(7). Industrial trucks shall be examined before being placed in service, and shall not be placed in service if the examination shows any condition adversely affecting the safety of the vehicle. Such examination shall be made at least daily. Where industrial trucks are used on a round-the-clock basis, they shall be examined after each shift. Defects when found shall be immediately reported and corrected. The average citation and final penalty for both lumber yards and home centers was $100 per incident. While these seem low, violation of this standard can be considered serious.

**Training requirements – Another Easy Fix!**

There are always citations in the annual data for failure to train forklift operators as required under 1910.178(l), Operator training. These can be considered serious violations. Failure to ensure safe operation by operators, a violation of 1910.178(l)(1) resulted in initial citations averaging $1,683 and final penalty averaging $1,051. Violation of 1910.178(l)(2), program implementation, which requires among other things direct supervision of all trainees, resulted in initial citations averaging $700 and negotiated penalty averaging $455. In one instance, considered a serious violation, a home center was initially cited $12,471 for a violation of program implementation and negotiated the final penalty to $9,665.

1910.178(l)(3). Training program content. Powered industrial truck operators shall receive initial training in the following topics, except in topics which the employer can demonstrate are not applicable to safe operation of the truck in the employer's workplace. This section includes the specific topics that must be included in operator training and includes required formal instruction and practical part of the training. Data show two hardware store violations of this standard, both considered serious, with the average initial citations of $9,837 resulting in final penalties averaging $3,500.
1910.178(l)(4). *Refresher training and evaluation.* This section specifies the circumstances when refresher training is required, with all operators requiring refresher training every 3 years. Data show three hardware store violations of this standard, two considered serious, with the initial citations averaging $3,863 and final penalties averaging $1,047.

1910.178(m)(3). Unauthorized personnel shall not be permitted to ride on powered industrial trucks. A safe place to ride shall be provided where riding of trucks is authorized. Data show two hardware store violations of this standard, one considered serious, and one being a repeat violation, resulted in initial citations averaging $63,375 and final penalties averaging $36,850.