

RIDE THEM, RACK THEM, AND DON'T BREAK THEM
FORKLIFTS AND STORAGE RACK SYSTEMS
WHAT YOU KNOW, THINK YOU KNOW, AND NEVER KNEW!

Forklifts and Storage Rack Systems are used on large and small scales in all types of workplaces – General Industry, Construction, Agriculture, Maritime, etc. Chances are your employer uses them too on a daily basis for general storage purposes or for the handling of products that are purchased or made on-site. But, like anything used on a frequent basis, they are easily taken for granted. This constant usage results in slow deteriorations which are easily overlooked until the crucial moment when the accumulation of defects is like the proverbial “final straw that broke the camel’s back” and the systems fail - leading to injury and/or death, as well as expensive damage and lost production.

This presentation explores both the well-known requirements for the safe use of forklifts and storage rack systems, as well as commonly encountered misunderstandings of their proper use, maintenance, and repair. In addition, this presentation focuses on the unsafe conditions of forklift and storage racks systems that most employers aren’t even aware of and on learning how to recognize these hazards.

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Elizabeth Tomlin has a B.A. degree from Georgia State University (GSU) in Behavioral Psychology and an Associate Degree from GSU as an Emergency Medical Specialist. She worked as an Advanced Paramedic for Atlanta’s Grady Memorial Hospital for two years and then entered the field of heavy construction, holding job titles ranging from Safety Engineer to Corporate Safety Director on a wide array of large projects including a compressed air tunnel job, high rises, roads and bridges, power plants, barge facilities, pre-stressed high rise bridges, artificial islands, and underwater tunnels - including the Downtown Elizabeth River and Monitor Merrimac Tunnels in Tidewater Virginia. She began working for the VA Department of Labor and Industry in Norfolk, VA in February of 1990 as a VOSH Compliance Officer and in October of 1991 became the VOSH Regional Compliance Manager. Moving with her family to the Shenandoah Valley in October of 2001, she transferred to DOLI’s Verona Field Office and worked in Compliance and Voluntary Consultation as a Senior Safety and Health Engineer until December of 2013. She is currently the Regional Health Director for the VA Department of Labor and Industry’s Northern Virginia Region offices located in Verona and Manassas, Virginia.