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Changing Forklift Batteries

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Changing the battery in a forklift may seem like a pretty straight forward task, but there are many hazards associated with it.

Before you attempt to remove the battery from a forklift, ensure you dont have any jewelry on. Keep tools and other metal objects away from the top of the battery to prevent an arc or explosion due to short circuited terminals. This included the cable connector. We had a near miss recently where a split in the connector cable insulation allowed the metal wire to come in contact with the top of a battery cell causing it to explode.

Never stack batteries on top of one another. Several times in the past couple of weeks we have found batteries stacked on top of one another . . . this is very dangerous. Also ensure you are not setting the battery down ON the connector cable.

You should also wear OSHA approved PPE including a face shield, rubber gloves and a rubber chemical apron when changing a battery. Smoking and open flames or sparks are prohibited in this area.

Ensure your forklift is lined up with the hoist appropriately. Hoists are designed to pull straight up and down. Adjust your forklift position if you have to as a swinging battery can be dangerous and may fall off the carrier. Ensure the hooks in the carrier are firmly secured into the lifting holes on the battery. Over the years weve had a couple near misses where the hooks were not secured properly causing the battery to drop.

Inspect the connector cables to ensure there are no cracks in the insulation. Utilize the connector to pull the cable from the forklift or charger. Using the cable itself can cause stress on the insulation and if there is a hairline crack youll find it the hard way.

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