1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this SOP is to outline steps to be followed for the safe use of forklifts.

2. SCOPE. Includes procedures for operations with forklifts.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES.

   a. Natural Resource Supervisors: Review procedures with NRS to ensure understanding and compliance during safety briefings. Ensure staff is certified.

   b. Natural Resource Staff: Execute forklift operations in accordance with SOP.

   c. Failure to comply with this SOP may result in disciplinary action.

4. PROCEDURES.

   a. Before Operation

      (1) Only trained personnel with current authorization are allowed to operate Forklifts. Authorization requires successful completion of initial classroom training, hands-on work-area specific training (practical), and a driving test (evaluation). Recertification must be accomplished at least every three years.

      (2) Passengers are not permitted on or in the forklift or load.

      (3) Daily visual inspection must be made to ensure that the horn, lights, brakes, tires, gas supply, hydraulic lines, etc. are in safe working condition. Employees may not operate an unsafe forklift at any time.

      (4) Fill fuel tanks out of doors while the engine is off.

      (5) Operators must wear seatbelts on all such equipped lifts

      (6) Forklifts will be equipped with an audible back-up alarm when possible if not possible then a spotter will be used.
b. Picking Up the Load
   (1) Do not exceed the safe load capacity of a forklift at any time. Do not counterweight a forklift to increase its lifting capacity.

   (2) Forks should always be placed under the load as far as possible. Do not lift a load with one fork.

   (3) No load should be moved unless it is absolutely safe and secure.

   (4) When unloading trucks or trailers, the brakes on the vehicle must be set (locked) and the wheels chocked.

   (5) No person is permitted to stand or walk under elevated forks.

c. Moving the Load
   (1) The operator's view should not be obstructed by the load. In the event of a high load, the forklift should be driven in reverse.

   (2) Operators must look in the direction of travel.

   (3) The forks should not be operated while the forklift is traveling.

   (4) When the forklift is not carrying a load, the operator must travel with the forks as low as possible (maximum of 4 inches on paved surfaces). When carrying a load, it should be carried as low as possible (consistent with safe operation, 3 to 12 inches above the surface).

   (5) On a downgrade, the forklift should be driven in reverse, and the forks raised only enough to clear the surface.

   (6) On an upgrade, the forklift must be driven in the forward direction, following the load, and the forks raised only enough to clear the surface.

   (7) Use extra care when handling long lengths of bar stock, pipe, or other materials.

   (8) Avoid sharp or fast end-swings.

   (9) Compressed gas cylinders must be moved only with special pallets designed for this purpose.

   (10) Operators should avoid making jerky starts, quick turns, or sudden stops. The operator is not permitted to use reverse as a brake.

   (11) Forklifts should be driven on the right side of the road or aisle-way.
(12) Forklifts must be operated at a safe speed with due regard for traffic and conditions.

(13) Slow down on wet and slippery surfaces and at cross aisles or locations where vision is obstructed.

(14) Operators entering a building or nearing a blind corner must make their approach at reduced speed, sound the horn, and proceed carefully.

(15) Standard arm signals will be used at all times.

(16) Operators must give pedestrians the right-of-way at all times.

(17) Operators must not drive toward any person who is in front of a fixed object or wall.

(18) Operators should not put their fingers, arms, or legs between the uprights of the mast, or beyond the contour of the forklift.

(19) Operators must drive with both hands on the steering wheel. Horseplay is prohibited. Do not drive with wet or greasy hands.

(20) No person is permitted to ride as a passenger on a forklift or on the load being carried.

d. Parking

(1) Forklifts must be safely parked when not in use. The controls must be neutralized, power shut off, brakes set, key removed, and the forks secured in a lowest position, flat on the surface, and not obstructing walkways or aisles.

(2) A forklift may not be left on an incline unless it is safely parked and the wheels blocked.

(3) Forklifts may not be parked in areas that will block exits, stairways, fire extinguishers or any other emergency equipment.