

Forklift hand signals

Gestures from OSHA's standard chart for cranes (29 CFR 1926 Subpart CC, App. A). Agree on them with every operator and spotter first.



Stop

Stop the movement you are making.

OSHA: "With arm extended horizontally to the side, palm down, arm is swung back and forth."



Emergency stop

Stop everything at once. Obey it from anyone.

OSHA: "With both arms extended horizontally to the side, palms down, arms are swung back and forth."



Dog everything

Pause. Hold everything where it is.

OSHA: "Hands held together at waist level."



Hoist

Raise the forks or load.

OSHA: "With upper arm extended to the side, forearm and index finger pointing straight up, hand and finger make small circles."



Lower

Lower the forks or load.

OSHA: "With arm and index finger pointing down, hand and finger make small circles."



Move slowly

Make the signaled move slowly. Shown here with Hoist: raise slowly.

OSHA: "A hand is placed in front of the hand that is giving the action signal."



Travel/Tower travel

Drive in the direction of the push.

OSHA: "With all fingers pointing up, arm is extended horizontally out and back to make a pushing motion in the direction of travel."

SPOTTER RULES

- **One signaler at a time.** Follow only that person.
- **Anyone can call Stop.** The operator always obeys.
- **Lost sight of the signaler?** Stop until you can see each other.
- **Signal from the operator's point of view.**
- **Stand clear:** not by a wall or rack, never under raised forks.
- **Agree first** on any signal not on this chart.

Telehandlers: boom signals

Same OSHA chart. On construction work, a telehandler lifting a hanging load with a winch or hook falls under OSHA's crane rules.



Raise boom

OSHA: "With arm extended horizontally to the side, thumb points up with other fingers closed."



Lower boom

OSHA: "With arm extended horizontally to the side, thumb points down with other fingers closed."



Extend telescoping boom

OSHA: "With hands to the front at waist level, thumbs point outward with other fingers closed."



Retract telescoping boom

OSHA: "With hands to the front at waist level, thumbs point at each other with other fingers closed."

Sources. Gestures and quotes: OSHA 29 CFR 1926 Subpart CC, Appendix A. OSHA's forklift rule (1910.178) has no signal chart; the forklift meanings are our reading. Spotter rules: 1926.1419(c)(2), (f), (h), (j), (k) and 1926.1417(y) (crane rules, good practice for forklifts); 1910.178(m)(1), (m)(2). Winch or hook: 1926.1400(a), (c)(8).