Forklifts Lift Trucks Tool

Lift trucks are handy tools found on the sites of many businesses. This article will explain what you can do to reduce the risk of a lift truck incident. There’s also a pre-shift checklist below that you can adapt for your own workplaces.

The Equipment

Lift truck safety starts with the actual equipment. It’s critical that lift trucks be right for the materials and goods to be moved. They must also be properly maintained on an ongoing basis. Proper maintenance is essential not only to ensure safe and efficient handling, but since lift trucks are fueled by propane, to preserve the air quality in your workplace.

The Work Setting

Lift trucks must be operated in a work setting that allows for safe use and maximum efficiency. Among other things, aisles must be wide enough to accommodate the turning radius of the lift truck.

The Operator

Lift trucks must be handled by a well-trained and competent operator. A lift truck operator needs to have:

- An understanding of the operation of the truck, including its stability, capacity and load security;
- An appreciation of the hazards associated with the particular load being handled by the lift truck; and
- Proper driving techniques.

Many of these qualities can be taught in the classroom. But success in the classroom doesn’t necessarily translate into safe and efficient operation. That’s why operators must also be allowed to put them into practical in the course of an on-the-truck session. This way you can observe the operators and how well they apply the skills they’ve been taught.

A lift truck operator must demonstrate efficient handling techniques and ability within the workplace using typical loads. Assess their skills in:

- Racking;
- Stacking;
- Trailer loading;
- Ramp use; and
- Dock use.

Pre-Use Assessment Checklist

A key part of operator competency is effectiveness in checking the lift truck before using it. This can vary from the start-of-the-shift detail check to a simple walk-around periodically during the day.

You can use the pre-shift checklist found in the Tools section to perform this assessment. Of course, there’s no such thing as a one-size-fits-all model for this kind of thing. But the checklist in the Tools section is deliberately generic to facilitate adaptation to your own equipment and site procedures. You’ll also need to be flexible in how you use it. For example, you may decide to have a maintenance person complete certain parts of the checklist and make the operator responsible for conducting a visual walk-around and operational check.

Conclusion

For lift trucks to remain a cost-effective tool for your business, you need to look at the whole picture and check the operating environment, the operator competency and the lift truck maintenance. This short guide and accompanying checklist should help you in your efforts.

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Counterbalance Lift Truck Operator’s Pre-Shift Check

Truck Identity:

_____

Date:

_____

Time:

_____

Operator:

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Visual check	OK	Comments
Overall appearance		
Overhead guard		
Seat		
Mast		
Chains		
Cylinder		
Hydraulic hoses		
Forks		
Lock pins		
Fluids Engine oil Hydraulic oil Battery Brake Transmission		
Air filter		
Engine hoses & wires		
Battery		
Wheels & tires		
Propane tank		
Fire extinguisher		
Operational Check	OK	Comments
Lift & tilt		
Brakes		

Parking brake		
Steering		
Horn		
Lights		