

Forklift Truck Operator Daily Checks

Law

Employers and employees have general health and safety duties under the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**.

Fork lift trucks are considered as work equipment, Regulation 5 of **The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998** (PUWER) applies to all work equipment.

PUWER states:

- Every employer shall ensure that work equipment is maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.
- Every employer shall ensure that work equipment exposed to conditions causing deterioration which is liable to result in dangerous situations is inspected at suitable intervals.
- Every employer shall ensure that the result of an inspection made under this regulation is recorded and kept until the next inspection under this regulation is recorded.

Approved Code of Practice

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and guidance **L117 Rider-operated Lift Trucks** is aimed at employers and those responsible for the safe operation of fork lift trucks, as well as those in control of worksites, the self-employed, managers and supervisors.

ACOP L117 states:

- At the beginning of each shift, the operator should check the lift truck in accordance with the vehicle handbook and document the results. They should report to the supervisor any defects which might affect its safe operation to ensure they are put right.

Operator Daily Checks

Whatever you call them on your site, pre-use, pre-shift or daily checks they form an important part of most companies' Safe Systems of Work. Daily checks are crucial to ensuring forklift trucks are in safe working order; providing a regular opportunity to identify any issues before they lead to more serious and costly problems.

Why is it important these checks are carried out?

This comes down to safety, legal compliance and cost. Most importantly for operators, early detection of a fault could avoid an incident and potential injuries to them or those around them.

For employers, even if no one is hurt, the damage, repairs and disruption can be very costly.

And aside from the obvious cost implications, employers have to ensure forklift trucks are properly maintained and inspected at suitable intervals by law, to make sure they remain in safe condition.

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How is the check carried out?

It's recommended that pre-use checks should be carried out and documented by an operator when they take control of a forklift truck, in accordance with the vehicle handbook. By encouraging operators to carry out the checks themselves before use, employers will not only allow them to be sure the truck is up to the tasks they expect of it, but it will also encourage them to take responsibility for their own safety and that of those around them.

Typically, your fork lift truck check should include the following areas:

- Damage to tyres, e.g. example swarf, nails and other embedded material, cuts and bubbles. Pay particular attention to the side walls.
- Pressure of pneumatic tyres.
- Condition of the wheels, particularly the flanges on rims fitted with pneumatic tyres.
- Tightness and security of wheel nuts.
- Functional test of the parking brake, service brakes and steering gear to ensure they are working efficiently.
- Check fluid levels, e.g. fuel, water, engine and transmission oils.
- Check that batteries are adequately charged and leak free, the charger is switched off, the charge lead disconnected and properly stored, and the battery retention device is in place.
- Functional test of systems for lifting, tilting and manipulation, including attachments to ensure they are working properly.
- Visual inspection of hydraulic systems to check for obvious leaks, ensure hydraulic fluid levels are correct when the forks are in the parked position.
- Condition and security of the overhead guard and load back-rest extension.
- Check forks, for cracks, particularly on the heels and mounting hooks, bent or damaged fork tips and missing or damaged fork positioning locks.
- Check chains, for secure anchor pins, fixing bolts, damaged or elongated links and lubrication.
- Functional test warning signal, e.g. horn; lights, beacons.
- Check mirrors and any other visibility aids, if fitted.

Recording the check

Ensure there is: a documented pre-use check; a system for reporting defects and ensuring remedial work is carried out. Pre-use checklists help ensure checks are recorded fully, frequently and consistently, regardless of who complete them.

A good system will not only allow the operator to record their findings, it will also display to others whether the truck was found safe/unsafe to use at its last check.

Effective check systems remain attached to the lift truck at all times, meaning that a detailed inspection history is always available when required.

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Do I need to keep records?

Once the pre-use/daily check sheet has been completed, it needs to be securely stored as, in the event of a truck failure or safety audit, they may need to be referenced. Check sheets are to be kept until the next Thorough Examination Report for the forklift truck has been made.

What should you do if you identify a defect?

As per the guidance provided in ACOP L117, operators must report to a supervisor any defects which might affect the safe operation of the forklift truck, to ensure they are put right. Until they are rectified, the truck should not be used.

Operators training

Ensure operators receive training on how and why they need to carry out pre-use checks. If they don't understand the importance of pre-use checks, its more likely they won't feel the need to complete them. Make your workplace safer, compliant and more profitable by ensuring pre-use checks are made regularly and reliably.

Whilst managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring pre-use checks are carried out correctly, the operator should be assigned the responsibility of carrying out the check in accordance with the employer's policy.

Operator daily checks inspection booklets

The **UKMHA "Operator Safety – Daily or Pre-shift Checks" booklet** is a practical booklet that contains 66 inspection pages, for completing essential daily checks. It also contains a detailed guide as to how checks should be completed. The booklet is designed to fit inside a self-adhesive clear fronted plastic **storage pouch**.

The 'cheque-book' type **UKMHA Pre-Shift Inspection Pad** contains 30 inspection forms. The pad and completed inspection forms are designed to fit inside a durable plastic, clear fronted **plastic storage paddle**. The paddle comes complete with a cable tie for attaching to the truck.

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The information in this Fact Sheet has been assembled and interpreted to give truck owners and users basic guidance on frequently asked questions. Further important information will be given in the quoted reference documents. Responsibility for meeting the safety obligations discussed rests with the employer, and the UKMHA will not accept liability for any problem arising as a result of the content of this document. Technical Bulletins, containing more detailed information and updated as appropriate, are made available free to members of the **UKMHA SAFE USER GROUP**.

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