

Fork lift truck maintenance is a legal requirement

A lack of maintenance can lead to dangerous occurrences with the potential to cause injury and damage, it can also result in breakdowns and costly unscheduled stoppages. Furthermore, it is a legal requirement.

Various legislation places duties on individuals and companies (duty holders) who own, operate or have control over lifting equipment, including fork lift trucks. It requires that they take a broad look at equipment, to ensure that documented processes are in place for maintenance, examination and inspection that ensure safety and remove risk.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Legislation in the form of Part I - General duties - Section 2 of the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** (HSW Act) states:

2 General duties of employers to their employees.

- (a) The provision and maintenance of plant and systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)

LOLER requires that all lifting equipment be fit for purpose, appropriate for the task, suitably marked and, in many cases, subject to statutory periodic 'Thorough Examination'. Which is a systematic and detailed examination, conducted by a competent person to detect any defects that are, or might become dangerous

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)

PUWER sets out general requirements for ensuring that work equipment, including fork lift trucks are kept in a suitable condition.

Regulation 5 of PUWER focuses on three terms: 'an efficient state'; 'in efficient working order'; 'in good repair'. Although the terms might appear similar, they actually set three requirements for employers.

The two parts of Regulation 5 outline the general requirements for keeping fork lift trucks in a condition which does not pose a risk to employees' safety. It also highlights the employer's duty to ensure that maintenance logs where kept, are updated.

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Approved code of practice

Meeting the requirements of PUWER would be assisted by adherence to the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and guidance **L22 Safe use of work equipment**.

The correct approach to maintenance involves looking at all aspects of the equipment, not just those that might be thought of as critical parts.

ACOP L22 suggests how this can be achieved through routine maintenance, examination and inspection. It also advises on the kind of measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of equipment failure and any risks to employees' safety that could result.

While ACOP L22 is not law, it has been produced under section 16 of the **Health and Safety at Work etc Act. 1974** and has special status.

Maintenance

Always follow the manufacturers or dealers instructions for maintenance, examination and inspection.

Regular planned maintenance helps ensure fork lift trucks operate safely, efficiently and can identify problems before they become an issue. Most fork lift trucks are maintained on an 'hours run' regime; for convenience, a dealer may translate this into months, to determine the planned dates for maintenance activities.

During short term hire (i.e. less than 12 months) both the hire company and user of a fork lift truck, have a duty to ensure equipment is safe for use and thoroughly examined at the appropriate intervals, in compliance with the requirements of both LOLER and PUWER. However, when hire exceeds 12 months, compliance becomes the sole responsibility of the user of the equipment.

If you use a hired fork lift truck you must allow the hire company regular access to the equipment for maintenance, examination and inspection.

Only allow qualified, competent personnel to carry out maintenance work. Operators, unless suitably qualified, competent and authorised, should not carry out repairs and adjustments to fork lift trucks.

Keeping a maintenance log will allow the identification of recurring trends or problems and provides evidence that legal obligations are being met.

Maintenance

The type of maintenance or inspection regimes required and the interval between examination may be affected by many factors, such as:

- Seldom-used trucks may require alternative maintenance routines.
- Arduous working conditions (e.g. cement/aggregate processing, corrosive chemical, metal manufacturing, brine processes, cold stores and marine environments) will increase the frequency of examination, maintenance and inspection.
- Operating hours - machines running for between 60 and up to 80 hours or more per week, will require examination every 6 months.
- High operating hours - lift trucks running for 80 hours or more per week, will require examination every 4 months.

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Guidance on maintenance intervals etc should be sought from a dealer or the equipment manufacturer.

Operator daily checks

It is a legal requirement to have documented processes for:

- Operator daily checks.
- Reporting defects
- Ensuring remedial work is carried out.

Operator daily checks or whatever you call them on your site, form an important part of most companies Safe Systems of Work and are crucial to ensuring fork lift trucks are in safe working order. They provide a regular opportunity to identify any issues before they lead to more serious, costly problems and stoppages.

Early detection of a fault could avoid a dangerous incident with the potential to cause injuries to the operator or those around them and damage to stock and premises.

Operator daily checks inspection booklets

The **FLTA “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 **FLTA 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.

Law

Various legislation relates to the maintenance (including the thorough examination and inspection) and use of fork lift trucks, some of which are listed below:

- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**
- **The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998**
- **The Provision and Use of Workplace Equipment Regulations 1998**
- **The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992**
- **The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005**
- **The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002**
- **The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002**

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UKMHA further guidance

Also see UKMHA Fact Sheets 3, 4, 17, 22 and 28 for further information.

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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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34B Kingfisher Court,
Hambridge Road,
Newbury,
Berkshire RG14 5SJ

01635 277570
info@ukmha.org.uk
www.ukmha.org.uk