

Overseas Fork Lift Truck Operator Licences

As explained in Fact Sheet 2, in the UK there is no such thing as a fork lift truck driver's licence. It follows therefore that a fork truck licence issued in any other country cannot be valid in the UK.

Some countries do issue licences to fork lift truck operators. It is quite common for an individual from one of these countries, who is seeking employment in UK as a fork lift truck operator, to offer this licence, with an authenticated translation, as proof of their ability to operate.

Whilst there may be no reason to doubt the authenticity of such documentation it would be unwise for any potential employer to accept it at face value. At the very least the skills required to obtain that licence may not have been appropriate to either the type of fork lift truck or, the operating environment for which the individual is to be employed. Also the training may not be to the standard required in the UK.

Why don't overseas fork lift truck licences count?

You might think that this is harsh and penalises foreign workers, but there are good reasons for this rule being in place.

Standard of training

The main factor is that the standard of training given in some countries may not equal the standard offered in the UK. In the UK we have high standards for driving and operating fork lift trucks and these are in place to protect both the operator and those in the immediate vicinity.

What are your options?

When presented with an overseas fork lift truck driving credentials an employer needs to follow the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and guidance **L117 Rider-operated Lift Trucks**, which states:

'You need to make sure they have sufficient, relevant training, experience and ability for the lift trucks and handling attachments being used. Where there is any doubt about the validity of the training and/or certification, you should arrange an assessment of the person's competence and provide any necessary training and re-assessment before allowing them to operate a lift truck.'

Training providers can arrange short assessment courses to judge the ability and training needs of operators who have had limited formal training.'

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What are your options?

When employing workers from outside the UK, as well as assessing their skills and knowledge and retraining if necessary, take account of the following:

- Consider and manage the needs of those who may not speak English well, or at all.
- Make sure they have received and understood the information, instruction and training they need to work safely and consider how to ensure it is acted on.
- Make sure they are adequately supervised and can communicate with their supervisors.

Specialist guidance

More information is available from the HSE's Advice for employers – Migrant workers website [here](#).

UKMHA further guidance

Also see UKMHA Fact Sheets 1, 2, 6, 9 and 12 for further information.

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