

Supervision of Forklift Truck Operations

Forklift trucks can be very dangerous if they are not used properly, thus it is a legal requirement that employers provide supervision.

Legal Duty

Under health and safety law, specifically the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** (HSW Act) an employer has a duty for the provision of supervision, as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of his employees.

Furthermore, employers must ensure that every lifting operation involving lifting equipment, (including fork lift trucks) is appropriately supervised, carried out in a safe manner and is properly planned by a competent person. As required by Regulation 8 of **The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998** (LOLER).

Also, under **The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998** (PUWER) employers are required to 'ensure that any of his employees who supervises or manages the use of work equipment has available to him adequate health and safety information and, where appropriate, written instructions pertaining to the use of the work equipment.'

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 also place duties on employers to make arrangements as appropriate, for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures.

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 lift trucks. As well as those in control of worksites, the self-employed, managers and supervisors. It includes an outline of the main legal requirements relating to forklift trucks.

ACOP L117 states:

Supervisor training

The HSW Act requires you to provide adequate supervision. It is essential that supervisors have enough training and knowledge to recognise safe and unsafe practices. This does not mean they need full operator training, but they do need to understand the risks involved, and how to avoid or prevent them. Some organisations offer training courses for supervisors and managers of lift-truck operations.

Supervisors should be able to:

- Carry out an effective observation and know what to look for;
- Communicate effectively with operators and line managers;
- Recognise unsafe practice and behaviour;
- Maintain and promote health and safety standards

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ACOP L117 explains how to comply with the law in a specific way and has a special status in law. If you follow the advice in ACOP L117, you can be sure that you will be doing enough to comply with the law.

Supervisory Obligations

Though employers and supervisory staff are not required to be qualified forklift truck operators, it is their duty to have enough knowledge and training of the operational characteristics and the hazards, which could become apparent when carrying out forklift truck tasks. Also the confidence to stop any bad practices or behaviours that might be taking place, in order to maintain a safe working environment.

Supervisory Training

It is essential for supervisors to understand and be aware of the specific issues that operators face and have an appreciation for the high level of concentration required to operate efficiently, accurately and safely.

A typical managers' and supervisors' course will for example cover topics such as statutory responsibilities of PUWER and LOLER, management of health and safety, the design and limitations of fork lift trucks and attachments. Maintenance and inspection are also typically included.

These skills are important in ensuring supervisors recognise safe and effective forklift truck operations, thus maintaining proper safety precautions in the workplace.

Even experienced, fully trained forklift truck operators require supervision and monitoring, to determine whether they are working correctly and safely and if retesting or refresher training is necessary.

Correct supervisor training can reduce the risk of incident and injury and delivers financial benefits, by reducing damage to stock, equipment, fixtures, fittings whilst improving the productivity and efficiency of forklift truck operations.

It is important that forklift truck operators are trained to the standards outlined in the Health and Safety ACOP L117, whether using in-house trainers or external training providers. There are a number of organisations who provide accreditation for lift-truck training schemes. These voluntary schemes are intended to:

- Help set and maintain professional training standards.
- Help employers select training organisations or lift-truck suppliers who offer a good standard of training.

HSE no longer administers an accrediting bodies scheme, but if you decide to use one, the way a typical scheme is likely to operate is outlined below.

Although accreditation is voluntary, the use by an employer of an accredited training provider (ATP) provides some assurance that the training provided will be at least to the standard described in ACOP L117. Each accrediting body will be able to provide details of appropriately qualified and experienced ATPs to enquirers who seek advice about fork lift truck training, along with a description of their assessment criteria.

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Accredited Training Providers

Accrediting bodies accredit organisations or individuals as 'accredited training providers' (ATP) who are deemed competent to provide (or, in the case of individuals, to be) the instructors who carry out the training.

An ATP may be an organisation, individual or an in-house training scheme. The main conditions of accreditation are that ATPs use qualified and experienced instructors only, that they follow course syllabuses approved by the accrediting body and that they be subjected to regular monitoring visits by the accrediting body. The training must also be carried out in suitable premises, which may be a dedicated training centre or an area set aside for the purpose at an employer's premises.

To become accredited, a training provider applies to one (or more) of the accrediting bodies. If the training is to be carried out at a training centre, the accrediting body will inspect that facility.

If training is to be carried out at employers' premises, then the applicant is asked to demonstrate that they have all the necessary equipment and documentation, and to arrange to conduct a training course at which an assessor from the accrediting body would be present.

Health and Safety Executive's Guidance

This HSE leaflet [**INDG199 Workplace transport safety**](#) will help people involved in workplace, including forklift trucks transport reduce the chances of incidents happening. It is mainly aimed at managers and identifies some of the safety problems for common vehicle operations. Drivers, operators and their safety representatives will also find it useful.

This HSE pocket card [**INDG457 Use lift trucks safely**](#) is aimed at forklift truck operators. It aims to help operators and those they work with to stay safe while working with lift trucks. It covers operating, people, loads and slopes.

UKMHA Further Guidance

Also see UKMHA Fact Sheets 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 25 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