

## FACT SHEET 17

# How long does a Thorough Examination last?

**The lifting parts of fork lift trucks such as the mast, chains, carriage, forks and tilt mechanism etc, must be thoroughly examined by a competent person at least every 12 months and often more frequently, depending on conditions of use. Or in accordance with an examination scheme drawn up by a competent person.**

Fork lift trucks, attachments and lifting accessories used to lift people (e.g. a personnel work platform), even on an occasional basis, must be thoroughly examined at least every 6 months. Or in accordance with an examination scheme drawn up by a competent person.

The competent person will issue a 'report of thorough examination' and this must be retained by the employer for at least 2 years.

Thorough examination reports are not required for lifting equipment less than 1 year old, or 6 months for machines used for lifting people. In these cases, a copy of the manufacturer's Declaration of Conformity covers this requirement of [The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998](#) (LOLER).

## What is a thorough examination?

A thorough examination is a systematic and detailed examination of equipment and safety-critical parts, to detect any defects that are or might become dangerous, carried out at specified intervals, conducted by a competent person, who must then complete a written report.

The competent person will determine the scope of the thorough examination and they may use a number of sources to help them do this, such as industry guidance. The Health and Safety Executive's Contract Research Report - Thorough examination and inspection of particular items of lifting equipment ([CRR429/200](#)) may also be a useful reference tool.

## Law

Law in the form of [The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998](#) (LOLER) places duties on people and companies who own, operate or have control over (duty holders) lifting equipment, including fork lift trucks. 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'.

## Thorough examination of hired fork lift trucks

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 are thoroughly examined at the appropriate intervals. However, when hire exceeds 12 months it becomes the sole responsibility of the user of the equipment.

It is important for both the hire company and the user to agree and confirm who will carry out safety-related maintenance and thorough examinations. The user will need to ensure that necessary inspections and pre-use checks are carried out and defects reported and remedied, as necessary.

A copy of the last Thorough Examination Report must accompany the fork lift truck and be available for inspection.

## Interval of thorough examination

The table below is based on that published in the Health and Safety Executive's publication [HSG76 Warehousing and storage](#) that indicates the inspection regime, with the maximum interval for thorough examination periodic inspection for a variety of fork lift trucks.

Inspection regime for common types of trucks			
Type	Operator Positions	Thorough examination periodic inspection requirement	Maximum inspection interval <sup>3</sup>
Counterbalanced fork-lift truck up to 5 tonne	Rider or pedestrian	LOLER and PUWER	12 months
High-lift platform trucks	Rider	LOLER and PUWER	6 months
Pallet stackers	Stand on or pedestrian	LOLER and PUWER	12 months
Straddle trucks	Stand on or pedestrian	LOLER and PUWER	12 months
Reach trucks	Rider, stand on or pedestrian	LOLER and PUWER	12 months
High lift (>300mm) pallet truck both manual and powered	Rider, stand on or pedestrian	LOLER and PUWER	12 months
Medium-lift order picking trucks (up to 2.5 m lift)	Rider	LOLER and PUWER	6 months
High-lift order picking trucks	Rider	LOLER and PUWER	6 months
Very narrow aisle lateral and front stacking trucks – man-up	Rider	LOLER and PUWER	6 months
Very narrow aisle lateral and front stacking trucks – man-down	Rider	LOLER and PUWER	12 months
Pivot steer trucks	Rider	LOLER and PUWER	12 months
Bi- and multi-directional fork trucks	Rider	LOLER and PUWER	12 months
Pallet, stillage, low-lift <sup>1</sup> platform and low-lift order picking <sup>2</sup> trucks	Rider, stand on or pedestrian	PUWER	Follow manufacturers' guidance, which will usually be 12 monthly intervals. <sup>4</sup>
Pedestrian powered/controlled pallet truck	Pedestrian	PUWER	
Tow tractor	Rider	PUWER	

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> 'Low lift' is defined as lifting just sufficient to permit horizontal travel; or
- <sup>2</sup> In the case of low-lift order pickers, up to an operator platform height of 900 mm.
- <sup>3</sup> These are the maximum periods between thorough examinations under LOLER and are the defaults in the absence of an of examination scheme. If an examination scheme has been produced then the period may be different.
- <sup>4</sup> Inspection frequency should be based on how quickly the equipment or parts of it are likely to deteriorate; this decision should be made by someone with the correct skills and experience.

## Risk assessment guidance

The intervals of thorough examination illustrated above in table 8 should be decreased, if a risk assessment indicates intensity of use, or if equipment is operating in an arduous work environment. Some guidance of these factors is given below.

12 month interval between safety inspections. Any fork lift truck working up to 40 hours per week including attachments permanently fitted to the truck.

6 monthly interval between safety inspections.

- a) Any fork lift truck working between 40 and 80 hours per week.
- b) Any fork lift truck used for elevating persons, no matter how infrequent.

4 monthly interval between safety inspections.

- a) Any fork lift truck working in excess of 80 hours per week.
- b) Any fork lift truck working in arduous environments such as:
  - i) Marine environments.
  - ii) Corrosive chemical environments.
  - iii) Metal Manufacturing or processing.
  - iv) Cement/aggregate processing or where abrasive particulates are present.
  - v) Brine processes.
  - vi) Cold stores.

## FLTA further guidance

Also see FLTA Fact Sheets 3 and 4 for further information.

**The above information is provided by the Fork Lift Truck Association (FLTA) as guidance and, where applicable, takes account of current best practice and our interpretation of current legislation.**

**However, the FLTA accepts no responsibility for the recommendations, advice, statements, opinions and conclusions set out above, either expressly or by implication.**

**No warranty or representation of assurance, in respect of the accuracy or validity of the same is given.**

# Fact Sheet

**Fork Lift Truck  
Association**

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The information in this Fact Sheet has been assembled and interpreted to give fork lift 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 FLTA 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 [FLTA SAFE USER GROUP](#).

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