

Health & Safety Legislation

Safety Policy

Businesses which employ five or more people should have a written statement of their policy for ensuring their employee's health and safety.

In assessing risks associated with lift truck operations, employers will need to detail the dangers arising out of their use, including site traffic rules and pedestrian segregation, the system for ensuring that only authorised people use them, what pre-use, periodic checks and maintenance must be carried out, how often and by whom.

COSHH

Specific assessment must be made of the risks involved with handling, storing and using substances hazardous to health. Fuels, oils and battery acid will all require risk assessments to be carried out.

CE Marking/Rating Plates

Since 1996 all new trucks have had a rating plate which includes details of the truck capacity with the attachment supplied and, in addition, a CE mark on the rating plate which indicates that the truck conforms to all current legislation, including that relating to emissions, noise, electromagnetic compatibility, overhead guards etc.

Should the forks or attachments be changed for a different specification a new rating plate must be obtained showing the revised lifting capacity of the new configuration.

Thorough Examination

It is a statutory obligation of the operator of forklift trucks to ensure that all trucks receive a thorough examination by a competent person in order to detect any safety related deterioration in the equipment. This must take place at least annually, or six monthly in the case of equipment used for lifting people, or where there have been exceptional circumstances eg after an accident or dangerous occurrence, following a significant change in conditions of use or following a long period out of commission.

A report is issued and must be retained indicating that the truck is safe to use.

Hazardous Zones

Where there is a potentially flammable atmosphere, that could be vapour mist or dust, there is a risk that a lift truck could provide a source of ignition for a fire or explosion. Employers have a duty under DSEAR and ATEX Regulations to carry out risk assessments of their activities and premises and specify appropriate levels of protection for equipment and work place organisation to provide a safe working environment.

Classification of areas is as follows:

Zone 0 – A place where an explosive atmosphere is present continuously, or for long periods or frequently.

Zone 1 – A place where an explosive atmosphere is likely to occur in normal operation occasionally.

Zone 2 – A place where an explosive atmosphere is not likely to occur in normal operation but, if it does occur, will persist for a short period only.

Vehicle Excise Duty and Licencing

If a lift truck uses a public road (for any distance) it must be registered for road use, display a number plate, vehicle excise disc and must comply with road lighting regulations. The extent of lighting required depends on the speed of the lift truck and whether its usage falls between the hours of sunset and sunrise.

I.C. engined trucks are categorised as "Works Trucks" and electric trucks are categorised as "Special Concessionary Vehicles" for licencing purposes.

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Driver Training

Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act provides that it is the duty of employers to provide such "information, instructions, training and supervision as is necessary...". All new forklift truck drivers should have a written authorisation specifying the type of lift truck they can drive and the duration of that authorisation. Periodic refresher training is recommended.

When driving a lift truck on a public highway, for any distance, the driver must hold a current DoT Category B driving licence and be:

- not less than 17 years of age for trucks up to 3.5 tonnes laden all up weight
- not less than 18 years of age for trucks over 3.5 tonnes laden all up weight
- not less than 21 years of age for trucks over 7.5 tonnes laden all up weight

Reporting of Accidents

Under the reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, employers have a legal duty to notify the H.S.E. if:

- (a) Someone dies or suffers a major injury in an accident connected with their business.
- (b) An employee is injured which results in immediate hospital admission for more than 24 hours, or more than 3 days off work.
- (c) There is a dangerous occurrence which includes 'the collapse of, the overturning of, or the failure of any load bearing part of, any forklift truck'.

The above notes are not intended to be a definitive statement of the legal position and attention is drawn to the H.S.E. Regulations and Guidance notes covering these issues and others such as LPG storage, working platforms and electrical charging.

Two general booklets which are available from the H.S.E. and are very useful are:

HS(G)6 Safety in Working with Lift Trucks

HS(G)76 Health and Safety in Retail and Wholesale Warehouses

Additionally you can talk to your Barloworld Handling representative or local branch for further guidance on any of these issues.



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