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## The Forklift And How It Can Make Your Life Easier

By Dave Robinson

The forklift is a machine that will power you beyond what you can physically do. It offers an ability to lift, to move, and to utilize better the materials that are necessary. Many of the factories, landscaping outfits as well as warehouses of all sorts use these powerful machines to move stuff from one place to another easily. Anyone in the business of selling products most likely will need a forklift of some sort to help them. But, let's take a closer look at what these machines are and what the forklift can do for the average business owner.

Realize that the forklift is powerful enough to lift thousands of pounds without much muscle. They look quite similar to a construction vehicle in that they are designed of steel and often have an open air about them. The fork of the forklift is usually positioned in front of the vehicle. It is usually two steel forks that protrude from the front of the forklift. By positioning the forks under the object that needs to be moved, the forklift can be manually positioned and then it will lift the item and move it wherever it is needed. The forklift is easy to use as well. Most of them operate on a simple steering system that is similar to a joystick or a truck.

### What Makes It Work?

The forklift is a heavy duty machine. It needs to be powered powerfully, you would think. But in most cases, gasoline is the commonly used forklift fuel. Other forklifts use propane or even electricity to work. Which is the right choice in forklifts? Well, consider the ability of each type of forklift. Those that are powered by electricity tend to be less expensive to operate since gasoline and other fuels are so much more expensive. But, the electric forklift is less powerful, in most cases than others. It is mainly used indoors as well. On the other hand, gasoline or even propane powered forklifts use these more expensive fuels yet are able to lift more and work harder. They are often used outdoors. The drawback here, though, is that they often require more maintenance than other forklifts.

### Choosing The Right Forklift

In order to choose the right forklift for your needs, consider several things. First, consider your budget. Forklifts vary greatly in price. Most of the price difference, though, will be due to the ability of the forklift

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to lift heavier loads as well as the fuel that it uses. Some of the forklift options you need to consider include maintenance issues, warranty issues, and also the need that you have. Indoor/outdoor needs, ability to lift a specific weight as well as the need for it work to on its own or with human operators are all things to think about in the purchase of a forklift.

Proper training of how to use the forklift as well as proper maintenance of it will be the best way to get the most out of the forklift. It is necessary to take proper care of the machine as well as to train individuals properly to handle it. In many cases, it is necessary to obtain a forklift operation license. Properly maintaining the forklift will prolong its life as well as keep people from unnecessary injury.

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### **Safety Instructions About Forklifts**

**By Claire Quaty**

Forklifts are industrial vehicles made to take the place of manual lifting and manual work. There are two "forks" or arms located at the front of the vehicle that are used to lift, lower, stack and unstack heavy loads. The loads are usually stacked on top of wooden pallets that the arms or forks fit into to bring a large quantity of things up or down at once. The drivers cause almost 50% of accidents involving forklifts. Normally, the driver has hit a pedestrian. Therefore, forklifts and people should not be in the vicinity of each other.

Some other forklift related accidents include:

Forklift tipping over and overturning  
Collision with other vehicles or stationary objects  
Part of the operator's body leaning out of the cabin and hitting an object  
The load falling off the pallets

There are things that can be done by the employee to reduce the number of forklift accidents. First, the driver should always perform a pre-safety check of the vehicle before operating. Once the driver sees that all is in tact, while driving the vehicle the driver should use safe handling procedures of the load. This includes paying close attention to the load limit of each particular forklift. Since forklifts are a gas-powered vehicle, gasoline limits and storage should be carefully observed. In addition to safe fuel use, the battery also needs to be handled and cared for properly to ensure safety.

Here are a few safety procedures that should be followed by all employees. Some of them may seem like common sense, but they are so important that they are in need of repeating.

Passengers on forklifts to be strictly forbidden, unless there is a separate seat provided with a restraint

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Other people kept clear when forklift is operating Operator should take care when moving between artificial and natural light Load made secure and lowered to safe centre of gravity before carrying Sudden stops and starts are to be avoided No part of the operator's body to protrude beyond the overhead protection Ramps not to be used unless the forklift operator is trained in their use Operator to remain seated and secured at all times Forklift to operate within a designated area, separate from pedestrians Operator to remain in the cabin when a forklift overturns Most importantly:

**PEOPLE SHOULD NEVER BE RAISED ON THE FORKLIFT OR THE PALLETS IF THERE IS NO OTHER WAY TO LIFT A WORKER, A PROPER WORK PLATFORM MUST BE USED** In addition to checking the vehicle daily for safety hazards, the workplace should also be checked for the following:

Power-lines Blind corners Pedestrian areas Low doorways Uneven floors Ramps Overhead pipes and fittings Confined spaces Adequate lighting Noise

Above all else, a training course must be completed before attempting to drive or operate a forklift. Besides formal instruction, the training must include practical training (such as demonstrations) and an evaluation of the operator in the workplace to assure that he can operate the forklift safely. Initial training content must consist of both truck-related topics and workplace-related topics.

Some truck-related topics include:

operating instructions, warnings and precautions specific to the trucks the employee will be authorized to operate differences between the truck and the automobile truck controls and instrumentation engine or motor operation steering and maneuvering visibility fork and attachment adaptation, operation and use limitations;

vehicle capacity vehicle stability any vehicle inspection and maintenance that the operator must perform; refueling and/or charging and recharging of batteries operating limitations any other information from the forklift operator's manual. Some workplace related topics include:

surface conditions where the vehicle will be operated composition of loads and load stability load manipulation, stacking and unstacking pedestrian traffic narrow aisles and other restricted places where the vehicle will be operated any hazardous (classified) locations, such as flammable storage areas, where the vehicle will be operated ramps and other sloped surfaces; closed environments and other areas where insufficient ventilation or poor vehicle maintenance could cause a buildup of carbon monoxide or diesel exhaust; and other unique or potentially hazardous environmental conditions in the workplace.

More about her work at:

<http://www.forkliftx.com>



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