



Powered Industrial Trucks – Operator Training

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that the employer “ensure that each powered industrial truck operator is competent to operate a powered industrial truck safely, as demonstrated by the successful completion of the training and evaluation” program. OSHA requires that the training be conducted by persons who have the knowledge, training, and experience to train powered industrial truck operators and evaluate their competence.

Training should be specific for the equipment type (i.e., fork truck, high lift, etc.) and include formal academic instruction, practical training, and evaluation of the operator's performance in the workplace, including:

- Operating instructions, warnings, and precautions for the types of trucks the operator will be authorized to operate;
- Performance differences between the truck and the automobile;
- Truck controls and instrumentation: where they are located, what they do, and how they work;
- Engine or motor operation;
- Steering and maneuvering;
- Visibility, including restrictions due to loading;
- Fork and attachment adaptation, operation, and use limitations;
- Vehicle capacity;
- Vehicle stability;
- Any vehicle inspection and maintenance that the operator will be required to perform;
- Refueling and/or charging and recharging of batteries;
- Operating limitations;
- Any other operating instructions, warnings, or precautions listed in the operator's manual for the types of vehicle that the employee is being trained to operate.

Workplace-Related Topics:

- Surface conditions where the vehicle will be operated;
- Composition of loads to be carried and load stability;
- Load manipulation, stacking, and unstacking;
- Pedestrian traffic in areas where the vehicle will be operated;
- Narrow aisles and other restricted places where the vehicle will be operated;
- Hazardous (classified) locations where the vehicle will be operated;
- Ramps and other sloped surfaces that could affect the vehicle's stability;
- Closed environments and other areas where insufficient ventilation or poor vehicle maintenance could cause a buildup of carbon monoxide or diesel exhaust;
- Other unique or potentially hazardous environmental conditions in the workplace that could affect safe operation.



Refresher Training and Evaluation

Refresher training, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of that training, should be conducted when:

- The operator has been observed to operate the vehicle in an unsafe manner;
- The operator has been involved in an accident or near-miss incident;
- The operator has received an evaluation that reveals the operator is not operating the truck safely;
- The operator is assigned to drive a different type of truck; or
- A condition in the workplace changes in a manner that could affect safe operation of the truck.
- An evaluation of each powered industrial truck operator's performance shall be conducted at least once every three years.

Avoidance of Duplicative Training

OSHA provides that if an operator has previously received training in a required topic and such training is appropriate to the truck and working conditions encountered, additional training in that topic is not required if the operator has been evaluated and found competent to operate the truck safely.

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