

Operation of Fork Lift Trucks

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Procedure is to define the rules for the safe operation of Forklift trucks within the University.

2. SCOPE

These rules apply to all rider-type forklift trucks operated on University campuses.

3. DEFINITIONS

Forklift trucks (FLT)	This procedure concerns rider-type forklift trucks.
Qualified Instructor	Someone who has been trained and recognised by the Road Transport Industry Training Board, RTITB, as an approved instructor in the use and operation of mobile equipment, namely counterbalance and reach trucks.
Authority to Drive	This is the form whereby a manager formally gives an employee the permission to drive and operate mobile equipment. The form contains training and license information, evidence that a medical examination has taken place, expiry date and the manager's signature. Form is shown at the end of this procedure.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Vice-Chancellor

- 4.1 On behalf of the Council the Vice-Chancellor has executive responsibility to ensure, that the requirements of the health and safety legislation and the University health and safety policy are complied with. The Vice-Chancellor will ensure that responsibility for health and safety is properly assigned and accepted at all levels within the University.

Deans, Directors, Heads of Schools and Departments and Research Institute Directors, Managers

- 4.2 Are responsible for ensuring that all forklift truck operations are managed in accordance with this procedure.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Drivers

5.1.1 Medical Certification

- A medical examination must be arranged with Occupational Health Department for each prospective Truck driver before training commences, and every 3 years thereafter.
- A driver must be certified fit to drive and authorised by the Occupational Health Department.
- The Occupational Health Department will indicate on the report any special conditions applicable to an individual driver.
- Medical must be completed within 3 months of the current expiry date otherwise the candidate will not be considered authorised to drive.
- Authority to Drive records will be held by the department and any special conditions monitored where appropriate.

5.1.2 Truck Training

The training of drivers should be carried out by a qualified instructor and always include three stages;

- Basic training - the basic skills and knowledge required for safe operation (course duration typically 5 days)
- Specific job training - knowledge of workplace and experience of any special needs and handling attachments (these stages may be combined but should always be off the job)
- Familiarisation training – driver on-the-job under close supervision

Further Training: Managers should periodically reassess all drivers to ensure that they continue to operate lift trucks safely and to identify a need for refresher training, particularly for those drivers who have not used trucks for some time or for those who only use them occasionally.

It is essential that supervisors of drivers, even if they don't drive trucks themselves, have sufficient training to recognise unsafe practices. Training records, detailing the nature and content of the training and testing should be kept for each driver.

5.1.3 Authority to Drive.

The Authority to Drive form must be signed and dated by the individual's manager.

Personnel should not be allowed to operate a FLT without a written authorisation. The authorisation should relate to a specific type of FLT and the work for which the employee has been trained. The keys should be removed from the FLT when not in use and kept in a safe place to prevent unauthorised use.

Authority to Drive forms will be held by the department and any special conditions monitored where appropriate.

5.2 Equipment

5.2.1 Forklift truck SWL and associated equipment

- Every forklift truck must have a safe working load (SWL) rating plate. This must:

- be firmly fixed to the forklift truck
- be visible and legible
- provide all the information required by the applicable standards and included details of any modifications and additions made over time
- If a forklift truck is fitted with safety equipment (seat belt, flashing light, reversing alarm, shock detectors, etc.) these must be in good working order and must be used by the operator.
- The forklift truck must be fitted with a battery retention device preventing the battery from falling out should the forklift truck overturn.

5.2.2 Regulation Checks, Inspections and Maintenance of forklift trucks

- Before use, the forklift truck must be subject to a visual and operational check using the pre-work checklist.
- The pre-work checklist must be completed and signed-off by the first person using the vehicle on a particular day.
- All problems must be recorded on the pre-work checklist
- The specific issue must be recorded on the reverse of the pre-work checklist
- When the pre-work check has been completed the card is placed into its holder
- If a 'serious' problem is detected, i.e. damaged forks, pins or overhead guard, faulty horn or hand or foot brake, the forklift truck must not be used
- It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that problems noted during the pre-work check are scheduled for repair and that serious problems are repaired before the truck is used again.
- Pre-Work inspection cards must be retained and kept for a period of one year for reference and audit purposes in the event of an incident.

5.2.3 Maintenance of forklift trucks

- Forklift trucks can only be maintained by duly trained and authorised maintainers
- Each forklift truck will be the subject of a routine maintenance programme
- The maintenance will be to the manufacturers' recommendations
- The maintenance of each forklift truck must be recorded.
- More thorough weekly maintenance should be carried out on the truck.
- There should be a thorough examination and test of the trucks on an annual basis. A certificate should be issued by the examiner to the effect that the truck is safe to use.

5.3 Driving

- Forklift truck drivers must apply the techniques and rules of operation learned during training.
- When using a forklift truck, he/she must respect the environment in which he/she is driving e.g. pedestrians, equipment, buildings, etc.
- Specifically, he or she must:
 - Respect the lifting capacity of the forklift truck. Attachments such as clamps and cages will reduce the SWL of the FLT and an authorised dealer should be contacted for advice regarding the reduced SWL. The operator should be given additional training on the use of such attachments.
 - Drive at a speed that will allow him/her to control and stop the vehicle at any time.
 - Know the operating and stability limits of the forklift truck.
 - The use of a forklift truck as an elevating platform for personnel is prohibited except where this is an option included by the manufacturer that has been officially approved.
 - Never carry a passenger on a forklift truck.
 - Travel with the load in the lower position with the mast inclined to the rear. When circulating without a load it is imperative that the forks are kept in the lower position, 20 to 30 cm from the ground.
 - Travel in reverse gear only when strictly necessary and only if visibility in forward gear is insufficient, or when carrying a load down a slope.
 - Slow down and if necessary use an audible warning device when approaching a junction or intersection and where visibility is poor.
 - Stop at each and every stop sign. Ensure that the way is clear and sound the horn before setting off again.
 - Park the forklift truck only in the designated places.
 - When stopped, the forklift truck operator must ensure that:
 - the forks are kept on the ground,
 - the parking brake is on
 - the ignition key is removed
 - Wear personal protective equipment suitable for the work being carried.
 - Drivers are advised to wear their seat belt (this rule does not apply to forklift trucks with retractable masts or equipped with another restraint system).
 - The use of computer, audio, telephone equipment, etc. and the reading of documents are prohibited when the forklift truck is moving, regardless of the speed.

- The operation of a forklift truck while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is strictly prohibited.
- The keys to the truck should be kept in a secure place when the equipment is not in use. Keys should be issued to authorised operators only and be retained by such persons until the end of the work period, when they should be returned to the manager responsible for the operation.

5.4 Operating Area

Layout and maintenance of operating areas for forklift trucks are important in ensuring safe operation. The following points are relevant:

- Floors and roadways should be of adequate load-bearing capacity as well as being smooth-surfaced and level.
- Ramps should be installed to prevent displacement of the load at gutters, changes in floor level, etc.
- Gradients should never exceed 10% and there should be a smooth gradual change of gradient at the bottom and top of the slope.
- Aisles should be of adequate width and overhead clearance to facilitate turning and safe movement, and should be kept clear at all times.
- Lighting should be adequate with a minimum overall luminance level of 100 Lux.
- Adequate general vehicle parking facilities should be provided away from the main operating areas and preferably in a secure compound

5.5 Use of forklift trucks by subcontractors

- Loan of a forklift truck to a contractor is prohibited
- If a subcontractor must use his own forklift truck:
 - the contractor shall strictly apply the requirements of this procedure.
 - the contractor must be able to show the existence of documents relating to the training of the operators and the conformity of the forklift trucks used.

6 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order (1978)
Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations
Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations
L117: Rider Operated Lift Trucks - Operator Training - Approved Code of Practice and Guidance

FORKLIFT TRUCK DRIVER	
AUTHORITY TO DRIVE	
NAME:	
DEPARTMENT:	
CAMPUS:	
MANAGER	
BASIC TRAINING MODULE	
DATE COMPLETED:	
TRAINER:	
LICENCES HELD:	
ATTACHMENTS	
MEDICAL AUTHORISATION:	
THIS CANDIDATE IS CONSIDERED MEDICALLY FIT TO OPERATE A FORKLIFT LIFT TRUCK	
ANY SPECIAL CONDITIONS	
SIGNED:	OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT
DATE:	

DAILY INSPECTION CHECKLIST						
FLT NUMBER:				WEEK		
COMMENCING:						
Mon	Tues	Wed	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
Check Fork Arms / Pins / Overhead Guard / Horn / Footbrake / Handbrake						
IF FLT FAILS ANY OF THE ABOVE CHECKS – DO NOT OPERATE						
Check Lift / Lower / Tilt / Reach / Cylinder Condition / Attachments						
Check Forward / Reverse Direction Control Lever						
Check Chain / Pulleys / Backrest extension / Carriage Plate / Mast rollers / Slides						
Check Mast Channels / Chain / Cylinders and Mast Extended						
Check Steering / Seat Switch / Footplate / Emergency Stop / Dials / Lights						
Check Oils Leaks / Tyres / Wheels / Seat / Seat Belt / Bodywork						
Check battery / Cover / Connections / Filler Caps / Charger						
Check battery lifting hoist / Hoist Clips / Sling / Hooks / Controls (if applicable)						
UNDERLINE FAULTY PARTS RECORD ON THE REVERSE OF THIS CARD						