



Top Tips for Safe Lift Truck Mounting and Dismounting

Many musculoskeletal, and other, injuries occur when operators are getting on and off lift trucks. Although mounting and dismounting techniques may vary depending on the particular truck, the following steps should be considered to reduce the risk of incident or injury

Before you start

Operators must be properly qualified before they even think about driving a truck, but has their training included a demonstration of correct mounting and dismounting? During training, trainees should get on and off a truck under supervision so that technique can

be assessed and corrected.

Refer to the manufacturer's operator manual for specific advice on mounting and dismounting the truck. Operators should be trained suitably for the particular truck(s) that they will be using.

Conduct routine pre-use inspections before using a lift truck. This will include a visual inspection of key parts of the truck that must be done before the truck is mounted.

Ensure the required protective clothing is being worn. Hanging jewellery should not be worn and items should be removed from back pockets.

Mounting the truck

Check the environment and the floor around the truck. Debris and uneven surfaces can cause slips and trips. Also, be aware of other vehicles, pedestrians and even existing loads on the forks.

Check the truck's state of repair and consider how this may affect mounting and dismounting. For example, do you need to take extra care due to erosion on non-slip surfaces?

Face the truck when getting on and off. If steps are available they should be used. Good secure hand and foot holds should be established. Always maintain three points of contact with the truck when mounting/dismounting for stability.

Be aware that loose or bulky clothing, such as overalls, can catch when getting on and off the truck.

Once you're in the cab

Adopt the correct operating position by using all of the available adjustments. This is important for both safety and ergonomics. The seat, steering column and armrests should never be adjusted when travelling.

Sit down in the seat, lean forward and shift hips to the back of the seat to set the spine in correct alignment. Adjust the seat by sliding it forwards so your feet are resting comfortably and the pedals are within easy reach

Raise the seat to a comfortable height, checking for adequate

head clearance and maximum vision – ensure that pedals are still within easy reach. Ensure the weight limit setting is correctly adjusted

Adjust the steering wheel so that the steering assist is within easy reach of either hand at the furthest point away from the body – the aim is to eliminate the need to lean forward. Adjust the backrest to a position slightly tilted backwards to avoid excessive bending of the head and neck

If a safety belt is available it should be worn. Seatbelts are a legal requirement on most trucks since 2002 and for older trucks with any risk of over turning, operator restraining systems should be installed.

Make sure mirrors are adjusted as required. Make sure all areas of the body are within the operator's cabin before the truck starts moving.

Dismounting

Ideally find an even surface for dismount as landing awkwardly can result in injuries. Floor debris or spillages in the area of dismounting could also lead to slips and falls. Of course, check for other traffic before exiting the cab.

Never jump down from the truck. Three points of contact should be maintained during dismount for stability and to protect from musculoskeletal injury.

For more information on lift truck operator training to improve safety and efficiency during mounting and dismounting forklifts, visit

www.ribblevalleytrainingcentre.com

COURSE OVERVIEW

Operators should be trained to an essential level of skill to work with VNA trucks safely, efficiently and with competence. By the end of the course the operator should state the reasons for operators training, and pass a basic operatives skills test as set out in the HSE publication Rider-Operated Lift Trucks, Approved Code of Practice, (L117).

Course elements:

The course will comprise theoretical and practical instruction covering the following:-

1. Responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974, PUWER 98 & LOLER 98
2. Operators Safety Code
3. Battery maintenance and charging procedures
4. Pre-use checks
5. Factors affecting stability
6. Motive controls
7. Hydraulic controls
8. Manoeuvring in open and confined areas including entry & aisle safety procedures
9. Stacking at different levels
10. Destacking with laden and unladen pallets

Knowledge:

On completion of training candidates will have a theoretical understanding of the following:-

1. Responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, PUWER 98 & LOLER 98.
2. Operators safety code
3. Battery charging and maintenance procedures
4. Pre-use checks
5. Factors affecting stability
6. Stacking and de-stacking in open areas and the confines of a very narrow aisle
7. The knowledge of abseil requirements

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Operator Skill:

On completion of training the candidate will be able to:-

1. Drive and operate the lift truck safely and efficiently
2. Stack and destack at various levels in a safe and competent manner
3. Carry out pre-use checks to ensure the equipment is in a safe condition
4. Carry out battery maintenance and charging procedures

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WHO SAYS THAT ACCIDENTS DO NOT HAPPEN ??

The following reports highlight some of the typical accidents that occur in industry each year. For obvious reasons the names of individuals have been removed.

DRIVER CRUSHED TO DEATH

A man was crushed to death between a fork lift and the wall of a west midlands coal yard.

The man who was not named died whilst working at

It is believed he was using the truck to remove a barrel of rubbish next to the wall but stopped and climbed on to the forks to make an adjustment. Police said it appeared that the man's foot knocked a lever which moved the forks trapping his HEAD against the wall. They added that there were no suspicious circumstances.

WORKER INJURED COLLEAGUE

Magistrates in CARMARTHEN fined a fork lift operator £50,000 and Jailed him for 4 years for seriously injuring a fellow worker whilst operating a fork lift at work.

..... was operating a fork lift truck at a company in Johnston when he ran over the feet of his work mate, as a result of which one foot had to be amputated.

TRAGEDY AS MAN SEE'S HIS SON KILLED BY A FORK LIFT TRUCK

A tragic accident occurred at a warehouse in STRATFORD UPON AVON When a young lad was killed as his farther drove a fork lift truck at work. 12 year old was being given a ride on the machine by his farther on a Saturday morning. It appears that he leaned outside the body of the truck and struck a support column causing massive head injuries and killing him instantly. THE HSE ARE STILL INVESTIGATING THIS ACCIDENT

HEAVY FINED AFTER MAN LOSES LEG

A Sheffield engineering company has been fined £96,000 after a works fork lift driver lost his leg when his faulty truck toppled on him.

..... aged 26 tried to leap clear of the falling truck but was pinned to the floor by his ankle by the 4 tonne weight.

Sheffield magistrates heard that the boss at knew the truck had faulty brakes. The company admitted three charges of failing to train Properly, failing to maintain the truck, failing to report a previous accident. Despite engineers advice to stop using the truck. The truck was kept in service.

... needed 3 operations on his crushed foot and now has a false left leg from his knee down.

MANSLAUGHTER CHARGES DUE TO NEGLIGENCE AT WORK

Company director's contractors and management could face prosecution under the new manslaughter rules if employees or members of the public are killed at a work place or on a site.

Jail sentences could be imposed under two new offences.

Directors managers contractor's employees who send others to carry out work activity knowing that there is serious danger to employee's and the employee is killed as a result could be JAILED for reckless killing.

There appears to be some confusion within certain companies regarding the need to train operators on various types of industrial trucks.

The fact is paragraph 7 of the ACOP code does clearly identify that it is a general duty of the employer to provide training UNDER SECTION 2 OF THE HSW ACT to all operators of all types of machines.

It is a legal requirement to train all operators on all types of machines they are required to use.

LARGEST EVER LOCAL AUTHORITY SAFETY FINE FOR SAINSBURY'S

In what is thought to be the largest ever penalty for a health and safety prosecution brought by a local authority – and the fourth biggest ever safety fine, the supermarket giant Sainsbury's was fined a massive £425,000.00. The fine was levied after the food store admitted deliberately disconnecting safety mechanisms which directly resulted in the death of an employee. Winchester Crown Court heard that a worker died when he was crushed by a fork lift truck which had its safety cut off switch deliberately disconnected. Sentencing Sainsbury's Judge Kay said "The story is a picture of working procedures that date back to the dark ages.

Are you and your staff operating industrial machines? Could you be the next to face the courts and jail?