



Safety Bulletin

Why a Licence is not Enough

In order to operate most types of forklifts, operators must hold a high risk work licence, issued by the relevant work health and safety regulator. A common mistake among employers and operators themselves, is assuming that everyone who holds a high risk work licence is trained and competent to perform all types of forklift related work. In most cases, extra in-house, site and machine specific training is required. Operators must be adequately trained to perform the work they are required to carry out.

The competence gained from the practical training that's required to obtain a high risk work licence is basic. When training is completed and licence is obtained, operators are assumed to be competent at simple forklift operations. In the majority of workplaces that is simply not enough. This initial training is likely completed on a standard forklift with a standard mast that has no attachments and is lifting very light loads. Operators should receive training in the operation of the forklifts and attachments that they are using and training on the risks and control measures relevant to their specific work environment.

Safe Work Australia suggests that this training should be provided by a competent person and should include:

- Particular information on the industrial lift truck, such as: position, function and operating sequence of controls, relevant design features and centre of gravity, how to estimate the load centre of the item to be lifted, and capacity, stability and limitations of the industrial lift truck.
- Attachments and components which can be used. (When attachments are fitted, the centre of gravity and lifting capacity will almost certainly change).
- Safety features, such as guarding, emergency stop controls and warning devices.
- Safe work practices that apply to the industrial lift truck and the relevant work areas, including the safety of pedestrians.
- Operating conditions in all work areas including traffic rules, rights of way, and clearances from overhead electric lines.
- Procedures for reporting any fault, unsafe practice, damage to the industrial lift truck, accidents or near misses.
- Inspection, maintenance and repair responsibilities.
- Emergency procedures.



Assumption that a licenced operator is competent at all forklift related work can lead to avoidable incidents where safety is compromised. Managers and supervisors must provide site and equipment specific training to maintain and enhance operators' skills. Regular refresher training is also recommended.

Information for this article was sourced from www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au. For further forklift safety information contact MLA Holdings on 131 652 or www.mlaholdings.com.au.