



Lift Truck Safety

When you're inspecting your lift truck to ensure it meets all the requirements of the daily safety checklist, do you find yourself asking, "What am I looking for?" The following is a guide to help you with your safety inspection. Since there are many models and modifications of lift trucks, it is not intended to be a complete list. You must use a checklist specifically written for the vehicle.

Brakes

Is the brake pedal in good shape, or is it torn or missing? Is the mechanical parking brake holding sufficiently to keep the truck from rolling when parked loaded on the steepest ramp found in the facility? In a clear, level area drive the truck slowly forward, then backward and test the braking and the steering prior to putting the forklift into operation. If the brakes 'grab' as a result of rust build-up, you may have to apply the brakes a number of times to clean them. Check the oil level in the hydraulic reservoir. Lever lock brake assemblies that lock the brake fluid pressure in the system are not a substitute for a functioning mechanical parking brake.



Chains and Anchor Pins



On the end of each lift chain is a chain anchor pin. This hardened, smoothly ground steel pin is especially made for holding the chain to the chain anchors. Examine the anchor pins for wear or deformity. Use only anchor pins from the original manufacturer, do not use substitutes. If in doubt about a pin, check other pins on the same truck to see if it matches. Each hoist chain will have two, one at each end. While checking the chain anchor pins, be sure to check the lift chain for excessive looseness or damaged links.

Hydraulic Cylinders

Mast tilting, carriage side shifting, and in most cases steering, are accomplished by means of a hydraulic cylinder. These cylinders will have pins that anchor each end of the cylinder. It is important that these pins also have a visible means of retention. Run the lift, side shift and tilt through their entire ranges of motion before starting work. Also, check for leaking cylinders.



Hydraulic Lines

Hose failures can create two very serious problems: equipment failure, or someone being severely burned or cut. Inspection of hose routings and connections is important. Are sharp corners avoided? Are hoses routed and secured to avoid contacts that can cause damage? Is steel tubing secured to prevent movement and chaffing in brackets? This is also a good time to check for oil leaks. If there is oil on the floor, the forklift should be taken out of service. If you suspect a pinhole leak in a hydraulic line, do not pass your hands near it as there may be sufficient pressure to amputate fingers. Use a sheet of cardboard for this purpose.



Forks

Is there visible wear at the heel of the forks? Look for hairline cracks where forks bend. Where the forks attach to the carriage, the fork locks should be inspected for damage that might allow the forks to slide during a turn, causing a load to become unstable or spill.



Operator's Compartment

Check for clean deck plates/floor boards and steps. The operator's feet could slip on oily surfaces when mounting or dismounting. Check items that might have worked loose, including the seat mounting bolts, the steering wheel mounting nut, foot pedals, and levers. Check the seat belt fabric, buckle latch, and anchors/anchor bolts. Make sure that headlights, brake lights, horn, the strobe light, and/or back up alarm are in good working order. If your truck has air-filled tires, check for correct operating pressure. If it has solid tires, check for deep cuts and missing rubber. Check the battery to make sure it is securely mounted, the filler caps are in place, and connector cables in good shape. Never fill a battery with electrolyte just prior to charging. se over the years, including the seat mounting bolts, the steering wheel mounting nut, foot pedals, and levers. Check the seat belt fabric, buckle latch, and anchors/anchor bolts. Make sure that the strobe light and/or back up alarm are in good working order.