

THE IMPORTANCE OF FORKLIFT INSPECTIONS

Safety is crucial when operating a forklift. When you operate a forklift you are taking responsibility for machinery that has the potential to cause property damage, accidents or even death if it is not maintained correctly and kept in a serviceable condition. Forklift inspections are a crucial part of forklift safety in the workplace and must be performed before operating any forklift to identify any damage and ensure the forklift is safe to use. Forklift inspections not only reduce the risk of injury to the operator and other employees, they also make it easier to spot and deal with maintenance issues early before they turn into a problem causing downtime, equipment damage or expensive repairs.

Forklift inspections should be part of the daily routine and conducted at the beginning of each shift and every time an operator uses a different forklift. Where there are multiple employees using the same forklift, operators should never assume that the forklift has been left in a safe condition by the previous operator. Pre-start inspections can be done using various tools such as touch pads fitted to the forklift or paper based checklists.

There are many types of forklifts but for the most part checking them follows the same procedure. There are pre-operational and operational checks you can do before and after starting the forklift; that will only take a few minutes to ensure your safety, the safety of the people around you and the safety of your forklift.

PRE-OPERATIONAL CHECKS

VISUAL CHECKS:

- Tyres (check for wear, splitting and pressures)
- Condition of the lights and lenses, all working, not loose
- Condition of the gauges
- Obvious signs of damage to the body and overhead guards
- Obvious signs of damage to the mast, lifting assembly and attachments
- Forklift tyres and backrest for cracks and fractures
- Hydraulic hose, unions, cylinders for leaks or damage
- Underneath the forklift for fuel or oil leaks
- Engine bay for plastic/rubbish that may have been sucked up (remember to wear gloves and only check when engine has cooled down)

PHYSICAL CHECKS:

- LPG bottle for leaks and security
- Battery connections
- Security of the fitting of attachments
- Thickness and condition of the tyres

LIQUID LEVEL CHECKS:

- Hydraulic fluid for leaks from hose and connections
- Brake Fluid
- Engine Coolant
- Battery water levels
- Fuels, LPG, Diesel

OPERATIONAL CHECKS

CHECKS PRIOR TO LIFTING YOUR FIRST LOAD:

Once you have completed the initial checks (Before using the Forklift) you're not done just yet. It's extremely important to go through a few safety tests when initially starting your forklift, as you would rather find out the faults and problems prior to putting the forklift to use.

Ensure you check the:

- Hand brake
- Transmission: Forward and reverse positive movement
- Brakes and inching pedal
- Full range of steering movement
- Lift control, tilt control and side shift if fitted
- Additional devices fitted
- Horn, flashing lights, headlamps, indicator, reversing lights and beeper
- Instruments are working correctly

If your site does not have a pre start check system in place, speak to your supervisor or Programmed Representative.