



Lift Truck Training – Advice to employers

Extracts taken from the “Approved Code of Practice and guidance for “Rider Operated Lift Trucks” L117. To read this in full visit [Rider-operated lift trucks: Operator training and safe use. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L117 \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/lifttrucks/)

Lift trucks are widely used for moving materials and goods, but they are involved in about a quarter of all workplace transport accidents. The deaths and injuries caused can ruin lives and businesses. Even when an incident does not cause injury, it can still mean costly damage to lift trucks, buildings, fittings and goods.

As an employer you are required to provide basic training and testing for all lift-truck operators you employ (both new and existing). Properly trained operators can reduce the risk of lift-truck accidents in your workplace

Who should you train?

Potential lift-truck operators should be:

- reasonably fit, both physically and mentally, to safely control and operate lift trucks, with the learning ability and potential to become competent operators;
- reliable, with a responsible attitude to their work;
- physically capable – you should assess this on an individual basis. You may need to get medical advice and make reasonable adjustments to enable some disabled people to work as lift-truck operators. The Equality Act 2010 is likely to apply;
- over the minimum school-leaving age (16), except in ports, where they must be at least 18 years old, unless they are undergoing a suitable course of training, properly supervised by a competent person. Children under 16 should never operate lift trucks. Look at www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/index.htm.

Medical considerations

People selected to operate lift trucks should be free from disabilities, either physical or psychological, that might pose a threat to their own health and safety or the safety of others who might be affected by them operating lift trucks. Fitness for operating should always be judged on a case-by-case basis. You will need to do a risk assessment to identify any hazards associated with the job and working environment and to identify the areas of concern. Never allow anyone who is unfit because of alcohol or drugs (prescription or recreational) to drive a lift truck.

People with disabilities do not need to be excluded from work with lift trucks and may have developed skills which compensate for their disability. You should obtain medical advice about their suitability for the particular work they will be required to do. Reasonable adjustments may be required to enable some disabled people to work as lift-truck operators. The Equality Act 2010 is likely to apply.

Migrant workers

When employing workers from outside the UK, as well as assessing their skills and knowledge and retraining if necessary, take account of the following:

- consider and manage the needs of those who may not speak English well, or at all;
- make sure they have received and understood the information, instruction and training they need to work safely and consider how to ensure it is acted on;
- make sure they are adequately supervised and can communicate with their supervisors

Basic training

Basic training should cover fully all the skills and knowledge needed to safely operate the type of lift truck and handling attachments (if any) the trainee will use, including awareness of the risks from lift-truck operation. It should take place 'off the job', without the pressures of production. It is difficult to specify how long a course should last as many things affect the rate of learning, eg the ratio of trainees to instructors, but a course for a novice operator would typically last 3-5 days. See 'Basic training: Objectives to consider' (taken from Appendix 1 in L117) on page 3.

Testing

Instructors should continuously assess a trainee's progress to ensure they achieve the required standards throughout training. At the end of the training, the trainee should pass a test, or tests, to demonstrate that they have the necessary practical and theoretical knowledge and skills to operate lift trucks safely. Appendix 2 of L117 includes suggestions for testing operator skills after basic training.

Authorisation

After employees have successfully completed all three elements of training, you should give them written authorisation to operate the type or types of lift truck they have been trained to use. You should not allow anyone to operate lift trucks on any premises without authorisation (except a trainee under close supervision).

Certificates of basic training

There is no legal requirement to issue certificates of basic training, but they provide evidence that operators have received relevant training and achieved an appropriate level of operating ability. The employee will need evidence of training if they change jobs. Note: There is no such thing as a lift-truck 'licence'

Monitoring and assessment

Lift-truck operators, even those who are trained and experienced, need to be routinely monitored and, where necessary, retested or refresher trained to make sure they continue to operate lift trucks safely. You can identify the need for further training using a formal monitoring and assessment process, carried out by a suitably competent person, such as an instructor. Formally timetable this assessment, eg a retest, to make sure it is done at reasonable intervals. Where an operator fails this assessment, arrange further training for them. You may find it useful to record these assessments in operators' personnel records.

Refresher training

Regular refresher training will ensure operators:

- maintain good driving habits;
- learn new skills where appropriate;
- reassess their abilities.

Refresher training or retesting might also be appropriate where operators:

- have not used trucks for some time;
- are occasional users;
- appear to have developed unsafe working practices;
- have had an accident or near miss;
- have changed their working practices or environment.

There is no specific time period after which you need to provide refresher training or formal assessment. However, you may decide that automatic refresher training or a retest after a set period of time (eg 3-5 years) is the best way to make sure employees stay competent. Where you adopt this approach, you will still need to monitor performance in case operators need extra training before the set period ends.