

How to Identify the Right Forklift for Your Operation

Tom Reddon



Over the last few decades, manufacturing industries have undergone some dramatic changes. These include safety improvements and new regulations about project management and execution.

That said, the technology in these industries has advanced along with the new processes. This is even true for forklifts. Today, there are plenty of lift-truck designs out there for all types of businesses, and with the right knowledge, you're sure to find the right machine for your needs.

What to Consider Before Buying a Forklift

Let's start with the most obvious factor: maximum load weight. The amount of weight forklifts can handle may vary drastically from one model to the next. If you purchase a forklift that can't carry the load, not only do you risk damaging the equipment, but you also increase the likelihood of a tip-over, which is the number-one cause of death and injury to forklift drivers.

After you estimate the maximum load, consider the environment where the forklift will operate. Is it outside or inside? While inside lift-design compensates for aisle width, overhead obstacles and reaching stacked inventory, outdoor designs focus on maintaining balance on uneven terrain. Also, outside operation requires higher-quality tires to prevent penetration.

Another factor companies often overlook is the model. Do your forklift operators have experience working with a particular truck design? If so, purchasing that same

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model could prevent unexpected accidents and reduce training time.

Finally, consider your budget. Like any other business investment, you want to purchase a truck that will maintain its value and functionality. This is especially true for forklifts because if one part malfunctions, the truck may be useless, which could halt production. So don't penny-pinch when it comes to valuable investments.

Three-Wheel or Four-Wheel Forklifts?

When you have an idea of your project demands and your budgetary limitations, it's time to assess the options. A good first step is deciding whether you should purchase a three-wheel or four-wheel truck.

Three-wheel forklift trucks perform well in compact spaces. One of the benefits is they offer superior turning on a tighter radius. These designs offer the typical functionality of a counterbalance machine, but they feature a single drive wheel on the center rear. This controls the steering and enables sharp, 90-degree turns.

In some businesses, such as inventory management, this maneuverability enhances productivity. Also, the design is lighter than four-wheel options, which is ideal for companies that need to transport their lift trucks.

Four-wheel lifts offer similar maneuverability with added comfort. If your lift operates frequently throughout the day, the driver would probably prefer this design.

With two wheels in the back and two in the front, the truck is counterbalanced. This enhances safety by preventing tip-overs. Also, if a driver attempts to lift too much weight, the chances of a catastrophic incident are less likely in a balanced truck.

Although the three-wheel version can take sharper turns, the maneuverability of four-wheel lifts is sufficient for most projects, all while being able to handle heavier loads.

Consult the Pros Before Purchasing a Forklift Truck

The process of selecting the right forklift isn't as simple as you might assume, and choosing the wrong design can be time-consuming and expensive. Not only do you need to pay for transporting the lift, but you'll also lose revenue by not having the right equipment on-site.

For more information, contact National Forklift Exchange at 1-855-322-1001.

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