FORKLIFTS: PRE-OPERATION & OPERATIONAL INSPECTIONS

Standard 1910.178(q)(7) and Interpretations

Industrial trucks shall be examined before being placed into service, and shall not be placed in service if the examination shows any condition adversely affecting the safety of the vehicle. Such examination shall be made at least daily. 1910.178(q)(7).

Powered industrial trucks are required to be examined prior to use; however, if the powered industrial truck is stored or is not used every day, it would not require an examination until it is ready to be placed in service. However, please be advised that powered industrial trucks that have been stored or not in use for significant periods of time may require some service or maintenance before being returned to use. The powered industrial truck manufacturer should be contacted for information regarding the specific truck's maintenance and/or service needs. (Standard Interpretation: March 3, 2005)

§1910.178(q)(7) requires powered industrial trucks to be examined before being placed in service. They must not be placed in service if the examination shows any conditions adversely affecting the safety of the vehicle. Although the standard requires that the examination be conducted, there is no OSHA requirement that the examination be recorded in writing on a checklist such as the one you provided. However, as an employer it is well within your rights to implement additional safety practices that go beyond OSHA’s requirements such as the completion of your written checklist. (Standard Interpretation: May 9, 2000) Nor does the standard require the examination to be documented. (Standard Interpretation: February 7, 2000)

OSHA Recommended Practices

The operator should conduct a pre-start visual check with the key off and then perform an operational check with the engine running. The forklift should not be placed in service if the examinations show that the vehicle may not be safe to operate.

Before starting your vehicle, conduct a pre-operation (or pre-start) inspection that checks a variety of items, including but not limited to:

- Fluid levels -- oil, water, and hydraulic fluid.
- Leaks, cracks or any other visible defect including hydraulic hoses and mast chains. NOTE: Operators should not place their hands inside the mast. Use a stick or other device to check chain tension.
- Tire condition and pressure including cuts and gouges.
- Condition of the forks, including the top clip retaining pin and heel.
- Load backrest extension.
• Finger guards.

• Safety decals and nameplates. Ensure all warning decals and plates are in place and legible. Check that information on the nameplate matches the model and serial numbers and attachments.

• Operator manual on truck and legible.

• Operator compartment. Check for grease and debris.

• All safety devices are working properly including the seat belt.

After completing the pre-operation inspection, operators should conduct an operational inspection with the engine running. This inspection includes:

■ Accelerator linkage
■ Inch control (if equipped)
■ Brakes
■ Steering
■ Drive control: forward and reverse
■ Tilt control: forward and back
■ Hoist and lowering control
■ Attachment control
■ Horn
■ Lights
■ Back-up alarm (if equipped)
■ Hour meter

NOTE: Unusual noises or vibrations should be reported immediately.

Additional Information

Sample Daily Checklists for Powered Industrial Trucks. Note: Checklists are provided as a guide only and are not a substitute for complying with OSHA standards.

Checklists for internal combustion and electric trucks
Checklists for various truck types and sample generic checklist