

POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS (FORKLIFTS)

What is a Powered Industrial Truck?

A Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) is a mobile, power-driven vehicle used to carry, push, pull, lift or stack material. There are twelve (12) different types of PITs, and designated types of PITs can be operated safely in varying environments (e.g. flammable areas, dusty environments, etc.) Talk to your management team to find out what specific type of PIT your company has and where it is OK to use them within your facility.

Operator Training

PITs are a very important part of material handling in many industries. They are also a source of serious accidents. All personnel who operate PITs must be trained and certified in their safe operation every three years. The training includes both classroom and vehicle operation. The training covers:

- Features of the specific PIT to be operated
- Operating procedures of the specific PIT to be operated
- Safety concerns of specific PIT to be operated
- Workplace conditions and safety concerns of areas where PITs will be operated
- Learn and practice actual operation of specific PITs to be operated
- Demonstrate proficiency performing the PIT operator duties specific to the workplace

Powered Industrial Truck Stability

The PIT is based on the concept of two weights being balanced on opposite sides of a pivot point. The forward wheels are the pivot point. This is the same concept as a teeter-totter. The load on the forks must be balanced by the weight of the PIT. The center of gravity is the single point where an object is balanced in all directions. Every object has a center of gravity. When a PIT picks up a load, the truck and load have a new combined center of gravity. The stability of the PIT is determined by the location of its center of gravity, or if the PIT is loaded, the combined center of gravity.

Operating a Powered Industrial Truck

Operating a PIT takes skill and knowledge. The PIT operator and those around the operator must treat the PIT with respect. Using proper operating procedures will

minimize the potential for accidents and injuries.

Forklifts must be removed from service when they are not in safe operating condition. PITs are required to be inspected before use (at least once per shift) and should include, but not be limited to; brakes, steering, forks, mast chain components, data plate, tires, counterweight, overhead guard, control levers, horn, lights, etc. Using an inspection checklist makes this task easier and thorough.

A PIT is not a car. PITs are tall and narrow and tip over easily, so operators must drive cautiously. Stopping a PIT is also not the same as stopping a car. The two small wheels are the braking wheels, so PITs do not stop quickly.

Powered Industrial Truck Safety

The most recent OSHA data indicates 95,000 workers are injured, and approximately 100 are killed each year in PIT related incidents. Most PIT injuries are caused by tip over accidents. The primary causes of tip overs are excessive speed while turning and raised unbalanced loads. The best way to avoid tip overs is to properly counterbalance your load. All loads must be placed as close to the back of the forks as possible.

General Safety Rules

- Keep the load low
- Never carry riders
- Plan your route
- Follow safe speed limits
- Park safely
- Watch for pedestrians
- Avoid sharp turns
- Watch for chuckholes
- Leave aisle room
- Maintain safe visibility
- Watch the slope
- Use your horn when approaching
- Follow all the rules of your company's Powered Industrial Truck safety program

