

Cleared 26 March 2020



COVID-19 – Guidance on training for rider-operated lift trucks (Fork lift trucks)

Due to the risks presented by rider-operated lift trucks they should only be operated by a suitable, competent person that has received appropriate training. Details on suitable training can be found in The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) current guidance on Rider-operated lift trucks <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg462.pdf> and the associated Approved Code of Practice, which also contains guidance: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l117.pdf>.

Existing trained staff

Employers and lift truck operators use certificates of training as a record to demonstrate that training has taken place. Certificates of training will specify a date by which refresher training should be undertaken and HSE is aware that the coronavirus pandemic may make it difficult for lift truck operators to renew/maintain their training certificates. This may mean that they have a training certificate that has recently expired or is near to its expiry date, and despite their best efforts they cannot access requalification training.

Although certificates of training set an automatic time period for retraining in law there is no specific time period after which refresher training, or a formal assessment is required.

If requalification training cannot take place for reasons associated directly with coronavirus, such as closure of training facilities, unavailability of trainers/assessors or by complying with other government advice on isolation and social distancing, it may be reasonable and practicable to extend the validity of current certificates by up to 3 months. Any employer or duty holder needing to utilise this extension period should be able to state clearly their reasons for delaying requalification training and demonstrate steps they have taken to undertake the training, if required. They should also be able to demonstrate that they are meeting their legal duty to monitor and supervise lift truck drivers to ensure that they continue to operate safely.

This guidance comes into effect for certificates expiring on or after 16th March 2020. HSE will review this matter over the coming months and will issue further statements as necessary.

Training of new staff

Where new workers are engaged, or existing workers have to change roles, for example in the role of Key Workers that support the businesses that are required to keep the country running in industries where rider-operated lift trucks may be operated. In all cases, to prevent accident and injury, the duty remains to ensure that staff are trained and competent to operate any industrial lift truck equipment, and this includes driver training and the employer must be able to demonstrate that the driver is trained and competent.

As capacity to train people that are new to fork lift use may be limited HSE asks training providers to consider which of their activities are critical to supporting Key Workers and prioritise their work accordingly. Any training providers who are working with Key Workers should adjust their activities to: follow Public Health England's advice regarding good hygiene practices and separation distances, and if relevant accommodate any site-specific rules to manage the risk of COVID-19 infection.