

FACT SHEET 17

How long does a Thorough Examination last?

As explained in Fact Sheet 2 there is no such thing as a fork lift truck driver's licence in the UK. It follows therefore that a fork truck licence issued in any other country cannot be valid in the UK.

Lifting parts of lift trucks, such as the mast, chains, carriage, forks and tilt mechanism, need to be thoroughly examined by a competent person at least every 12 months, or in accordance with an examination scheme drawn up by a competent person.

The competent person will issue a 'report of thorough examination' and this must be retained by the employer for at least two years.

Lift trucks and attachments used to lift people, even on an occasional basis, and lifting accessories must be thoroughly examined at least every six months, or in accordance with an examination scheme drawn up by a competent person.

Thorough examination certificates are not required for lifting equipment less than one year old (or six months for machines used for lifting people). In these cases, a copy of the manufacturer's Declaration of Conformity covers this requirement of LOLER.

The competent person: should have enough appropriate practical and theoretical knowledge and experience of the lifting equipment so that they can detect defects or weaknesses, and assess how important they are in relation to the safety and continued use of the equipment; should be sufficiently independent and impartial to make objective decisions, especially if they are also servicing and maintaining the truck; may be employed by a separate company, or selected by an employer from suitably trained and competent members of their own staff.

If the competent person considers there is a defect indicating an existing or imminent risk of serious personal injury to the operator or others, they should state this on the report of thorough examination and recommend to a person in authority that the equipment is withdrawn from service immediately.

The competent person is required to copy any report made under these circumstances to the appropriate enforcing authority (HSE or the local authority).

Thorough examination of hired lift trucks

Both the hire company and users hiring a lift truck have a duty to ensure they are safe for use and are thoroughly examined at the appropriate intervals. It is important for both the hire company and the user to agree and confirm who will carry out safety-related maintenance and thorough examinations. The user will need to ensure that necessary inspections and pre-use checks are carried out and defects reported and remedied as necessary. A copy of the last examination report must accompany the truck and be available for inspection.

Inspection will identify whether work equipment can be operated, adjusted and maintained safely. It is necessary for any equipment where significant risks to health and safety may arise from incorrect installation, reinstallation, deterioration or any other circumstances. Risk assessment will determine the need for inspection and how often it needs to be carried out. Inspection and thorough examination are not the same, although a competent person may suggest combining them, if appropriate. Lifting equipment may also need to be inspected at suitable intervals between thorough examinations, usually where the risk assessment has identified a significant risk from the use of the equipment.

Any defects identified should be reported and if safety critical, the lift truck should not be used until the fault is rectified.

The information in this Fact Sheet has been assembled and interpreted to give truck owners and users basic guidance on frequently asked questions. Further important information will be given in the quoted reference documents. Responsibility for meeting the safety obligations discussed rests with the employer, and the FLTA will not accept liability for any problem arising as a result of the content of this document. Technical Bulletins, containing more detailed information and updated as appropriate, are made available free to members of the FLTA SAFE USER GROUP.

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