

The legal requirements for forklift truck operator refresher training

Lift truck operators, even those who are trained and experienced, need to be routinely monitored in the workplace and, where necessary, retested or refresher trained to make sure they continue to operate lift trucks safely.

The HSE Approved Code of Practice and guidance for Rider-Operated lift trucks: Operator training and safe use (L117) is aimed at employers and those responsible for the safe operation of lift trucks, as well as those in control of worksites, the self-employed, managers and supervisors.

This ACOP and guidance states:

“There is no specific time period after which you need to provide refresher training or formal assessment. However, you may decide that automatic refresher training or a retest after a set period (for example 3-5 years) is the best way to make sure your employees remain competent.

“Where you adopt this approach, you will still need to monitor performance in case operators need extra training before the set period ends.”

Regular refresher training will ensure operators:

- Maintain good driving habits.
- Learn new skills where appropriate.
- Reassess their abilities

Refresher training or retesting might also be appropriate where operators:

- Have not used trucks for some time
- Are occasional users.
- Appear to have developed unsafe working practices.
- Have had an accident, or a near miss.
- Have a change to their working practices or environment.

B Safe advises that refresher training should be based on a detailed risk assessment of your specific operation. You can identify the need for further training using a formal monitoring and assessment process, carried out by a suitably competent person, such as an instructor.

Formally timetable this assessment (for example a retest) to make sure it is done at reasonable intervals. Where an operator fails this assessment, arrange further training for them. You may find it useful to record these assessments in operators' personnel records.

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The information in this document has been assembled and interpreted to give truck owners and users basic guidance on frequently asked questions. Responsibility for meeting the safety obligations documented rests with the employer, and Bsafe will not accept liability for any problem arising as a result of the content of this document.