

## What is the minimum age for operating forklift trucks?

**Lift truck operators should be over the minimum school leaving age (MSLA), except in ports where they must be at least 18 years old.**

There are particular definitions of people by age in health and safety law:

- A young person is anyone under 18 years of age
- A child is anyone who is not over compulsory school age. This means he/she has not reached the official age at which they may leave school, which is generally referred to as minimum school leaving age.

[The Management Regulations 1999](#) require you to assess the health and safety risks to all your employees and to identify what you need to do to comply with your legal duties to prevent or control those risks and ensure your employees' health and safety.

Under the Regulations, you have specific responsibilities towards young people:

- to assess risks to all young people under 18 years of age, before they start work;
- to ensure your risk assessment takes into account their psychological or physical immaturity, inexperience, and lack of awareness of existing or potential risks;
- to introduce control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Children below the MSLA must not be employed in industrial undertakings such as factories, construction sites, etc. except when on approved work experience schemes.

For more information, visit: [Young people at work](#)