

Thorough Examination for a forklift truck and is it a legal requirement?

Thorough Examination of industrial lift trucks is required under health and safety law: LOLER 1998, which covers lifting equipment, and PUWER 1998, which deals with all other safety related items, such as brakes, steering and tyres.

Your regular inspections as part of a preventive maintenance scheme or scheduled service are not a thorough examination. For more information see L117 Rider-operated lift trucks: Operator training and safe use and INDG422 Thorough examination of lifting equipment

If you are an employer or self-employed person providing lifting equipment for use at work, or if you have control of the use of lifting equipment, you must make sure the lifting equipment is safe.

The main requirements for you as a 'duty holder' are in the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) and the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER).

This leaflet provides advice on the options you have under LOLER relating to the requirement for thorough examination and inspection of lifting equipment and explains the benefits of having an 'examination scheme'.

However, this does not replace the necessity for operators to carry out checks to lifting equipment and accessories before use.

What does LOLER require?

LOLER addresses the specific risks associated with the use of lifting equipment. Thorough examination and inspection are key requirements of the Regulations. To meet these requirements, duty holders must: ensure lifting equipment (including lifting accessories) exposed to conditions causing deterioration which could lead to dangerous situations undergoes regular thorough examination by a competent person; and ensure all supplementary inspections and tests recommended by the competent person are carried out within the timescale stated. Examples of conditions causing deterioration are wet, abrasive or corrosive environments.

What equipment is covered by LOLER?

The scope of the Regulations is very wide and includes a range of equipment. There are two important definitions you need to know: 'lifting equipment' means work equipment for lifting and lowering loads. The definition includes attachments used to anchor, fix or support the equipment (eg the runway of an overhead crane); 'accessory for lifting' means lifting equipment for attaching loads to machinery for lifting.

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.

What is thorough examination?

A thorough examination is a systematic and detailed examination of the lifting equipment by a competent person to detect any defects that are, or might become, dangerous. The competent person will determine the scope of the thorough examination and they may use a number of sources to help them do this, such as industry guidance. HSE's Contract Research Report Thorough examination and inspection of particular items of lifting equipment (CRR429) may also be a useful reference tool.

Who is a 'competent person'?

A 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 not be the same person who performs routine maintenance as they would be responsible for assessing their own work; should be sufficiently independent and impartial to make objective decisions; may be employed by a separate company, or selected by an employer from members of their own staff.

How often must lifting equipment and accessories be thoroughly examined?

You must have lifting equipment thoroughly examined: before using it for the first time – unless the equipment has an EC Declaration of Conformity less than one year old and was not assembled on site.

If it was assembled on site, it must be examined by a competent person to establish the assembly was correct and safe, eg a platform lift installed in a building; after assembly and before use at each location for equipment that requires assembly or installation before use, eg tower cranes; regularly in service if the equipment is exposed to conditions causing deterioration that is likely to result in dangerous situations. If this applies to your equipment you have a choice (see Table 2).

You can arrange for the thorough examination to be carried out: - at regular intervals (either at least every 6 months or 12 months depending on whether the lifting equipment is for lifting people or not); or - in accordance with an examination scheme drawn up by a competent person.

Accessories for lifting must be thoroughly examined either at least every 6 months or in accordance with an examination scheme.

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.