



Forklift Pre-Operational Inspection

Introduction:

Before operating a forklift, conduct a thorough pre-operational inspection to ensure safety and proper function. The process involves checking various components and systems to identify any potential problems.

Discussion Points:

- OSHA Mandates
- The Visual Walkaround
- The Operational Check

Discussion:

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires daily inspections of all forklifts before use. Operators must document these inspections to comply with safety regulations and ensure a safe working environment.

Before starting the engine, you are required to perform a physical, 'engine-off' walkaround inspection. Start at the front and walk entirely around the forklift.

The following items will be checked during the visual walkaround:

- Inspect the fork arms and carriage for cracks along the blade and at the heels. Ensure they are properly aligned, not bent, uneven, or worn. Verify that the locking pins are secure and engaged.
- Inspect the mast for bends, damage, and wear on the rollers and channels. Check for broken or cracked weld points. Ensure that the lift chains are properly tensioned and well lubricated. Check the pulleys and hydraulic hoses for any signs of damage.
- Inspect the tires for proper inflation, excessive wear, and tread depth. Check the wheels for any damage and ensure the lug nuts are securely fastened.
- Inspect belts and hoses for any wear, and check under the forklift for fluid leaks.
- For electric forklifts, inspect the battery cables for fraying, ensure connectors are secure, and check for signs of leaks or corrosion.
- For Liquid Propane forklifts, ensure the propane tank is securely mounted and check for any tank or hose leaks.
- Inspect the overhead guard and load backrest to ensure they are securely bolted and free of structural damage. Check the forklift's body for any damage, and confirm that the data plate is legible.
- Check the fluid levels.
- Inspect the seat belt and other operator restraints for damage, and ensure they are functioning properly.

After completing the visual walkaround inspection, enter the forklift, fasten your seat belt,



and start the engine to test its functional components.

The following items will be checked during the operational inspection:

- Check the safety devices. Test the horn, backup alarm, headlights, taillights, warning strobe lights, and work lights. Ensure that the mirrors are clean, adjusted, and intact.
- Check the hydraulic controls. Raise the mast to its full height, lower it completely, and test the tilt and side-shift functions. Operation should be smooth with no unusual noises.
- Check the steering and brakes. Turn the steering wheel fully in both directions. Drive forward and backward at low speed; ensure smooth operation. Test the service brakes and the parking brake.
- Make sure that all dashboard lights, fuel gauges, and battery gauges are functioning properly.

If you discover any defects in the forklift, stop immediately and do not operate it. Place a 'Danger: Out of Service' tag on the steering wheel or ignition switch, record the problems on the appropriate documents, and immediately notify your supervisor. Do not attempt to repair the forklift yourself. Keep the defective equipment tagged out until a qualified mechanic resolves the problem.

As always, stay safe out there!