

# Forklift safety for employers: maintenance

## What is forklift maintenance?

Forklift maintenance is a regular schedule of services, preventative repairs, inspections and cleaning as set out in the forklift's operational manual.

Maintenance procedures can be included as part of a safety management system.

## Why do forklifts need regular maintenance?

Regular forklift maintenance:

- minimises the risk of accidents and injury to the forklift operator and others in the workplace
- reduces productivity losses due to forklift down time
- extends the service life of the forklift.

## Who can maintain forklifts?

- A suitably qualified and trained person.
- A maintenance person with experience in inspecting, maintaining and repairing forklifts and their attachments. Light and heavy vehicle mechanics are generally not competent to maintain forklifts.
- Only licensed gas fitters may repair and/or replace parts on LPG systems in forklifts.
- Only qualified tyre fitters should remove and fit pneumatic tyres due to the risk of injury from tyre failure if incorrectly performed.

## How to plan for forklift maintenance

- Refer to the manufacturer's operational manual for a recommended maintenance schedule.
- Keep records of all maintenance, including servicing, testing, commissioning and alterations.
- Respond to workers' reports of damaged or unsafe forklifts immediately.

## What to do with unsafe forklifts

- Develop and apply a procedure for dealing with unsafe forklifts.
- Tag, lock and/or isolate damaged or faulty forklifts to prevent unauthorised use.
- Engage a competent maintenance person to inspect and repair the forklift.

## What workers need to know

Workers need to be able to:

- perform pre-operational checks
- keep records of checks
- report any maintenance issues
- tag and lock out a forklift that is damaged or unsafe.

## Forklift maintenance checklist

As a minimum, employers should tick every point on the list below to show they are working to manage forklift safety in the workplace.

Review this list approximately every three to six months or when new forklifts are purchased for the workplace.

- Operators use and fill out a pre-operational checklist.
- Forklifts are regularly inspected and maintained by a competent maintenance person.
- The manufacturer's procedures for regular forklift maintenance are being followed.
- More frequent maintenance inspections are carried out for severe operating conditions or harsh environments (e.g. freezers).
- Parts on LPG powered forklifts are repaired and/or replaced using a licensed gas fitter.
- A qualified tyre fitter is used to remove and fit tyres.
- Forklifts are kept clean.
- Only parts and attachments that meet relevant safety standards are used.
- A procedure has been established and is followed for dealing with unsafe or damaged forklifts, including tagging and locking/isolating unsafe forklifts.
- Forklifts that have been identified as unsafe are not used until a qualified person has rendered it safe and removed the tags.
- Records are kept of every inspection, service, maintenance, repair and modification carried out on each forklift.
- Forklifts are regularly inspected and maintained by a competent maintenance person.

## Further information

[Forklift resources](#)