



CPA Safety Guidance

Overturning of Forklift Trucks

The Provision and use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER 98) deal specifically with the risk of forklift trucks overturning in Regulation 27 which says:

Every employer shall ensure that a fork-lift truck to which Regulation 26(3) refers and which carries an employee is adapted or equipped to reduce to as low as is reasonably practicable the risk to safety from its overturning.

This regulation applies to fork-lift trucks (FLT) fitted with vertical masts, which effectively protect seated operators from being crushed between the FLT and the ground in the event of roll-over, and other FLT fitted with rollover protection structures (ROPS). For example, rough terrain variable reach trucks when they are used with forklift attachments. Other types of FLT are covered by regulation 26 of PUWER.

A vertical mast on a FLT will generally prevent it from overturning more than 90 degrees, provided it has sufficient strength and dimensions for this purpose. If in doubt you should check with the manufacturer.

A variable reach truck is capable of rolling over 180 degrees or more and would need a ROPS to protect the operator if it is used in circumstances where there is a risk of it rolling over.

For fork-lift trucks fitted with either a mast or a roll-over protective structure, you should provide restraining systems, where appropriate, to prevent the driver from being crushed between any part of the truck and the ground should it overturn.

If risk assessment shows that an FLT with a seated ride-on operator can roll over in use and there is a risk of the operator jumping clear and being crushed between the FLT and the ground, a restraining system, such as a seat belt, will be required.

Restraining systems are also required on any FLT which is fitted with a ROPS. For example, a variable reach truck to protect operators from the risks of injury from 180 degrees or more rollover. To be effective, the restraining system should prevent operators (or any passengers) from falling out or being trapped by the FLT or its protective structure in the event of rollover.

There is a history of accidents on counterbalanced, centre control, high lift trucks that have a sit-down operator. Restraining systems will normally be required on these trucks to protect operators from the risks of rollover.

Some older FLT's provided for use before 5 December 1998, may need substantial structural modification in order to fit seat belts or other types of restraining system. Under these circumstances, it would only be considered reasonably practicable to fit a restraining system if the risks involved were of a sufficiently high order to justify the necessary modifications.

Where seat restraints cannot be fitted, and the risks are sufficiently high, you may need to use another FLT with a restraining system fitted.

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