

Electric Forklift

Used Electric Forklift Pennsylvania - An electric forklift is a forklift truck that uses an electric motor to generate power as opposed to an internal combustion model. Electricity comes from a fuel cell or internal industrial batteries. If the electrical source is by means of internal batteries, the batteries are rechargeable by connecting the battery to a compatible electrical source. These rechargeable batteries are lead-acid or lithium-ion battery. Electrical production by means of a fuel cell is similar to a battery source but cannot be recharged by connecting to an electrical source, instead requiring refueling. Internal combustion engine forklift models and electrical forklifts can complete the same types of jobs. Both models utilize two power horizontal forks to load, transport and unload items. The only substantial difference between an electrical forklift and an internal combustion engine forklift is the source of power. Typically, electric forklift models are used indoors in warehouses and similar facilities that cannot rely on internal combustion engines due to interior air quality.

Electric Forklift Classifications The electric forklift truck can fall into one or more forklift truck classifications. They are:

1. Class 1: Electric Motor Rider Trucks These forklifts can have pneumatic or cushion tires. Pneumatic tires are used on forklifts primarily operated outdoors in dry areas and on uneven surfaces whereas cushion tires are better on forklifts used primarily indoors, on smooth surfaces.
2. Class 2: Electric Motor Narrow Aisle Trucks The Class 2 Electric Motor Narrow Aisle Trucks are another classification. These units function within very narrow aisle locations with limited space. This design enables maximum storage space. Class 2 models feature a modified design to limit the amount of space the forklift takes up.
3. Class 3: Electric Motor Hand or Hand-Rider Trucks Another classification is the Class 3 Electric Motor Hand or Hand-Rider Trucks. These machines are hand-controlled. The operator is positioned in front of the machine and relies on a steering tiller instead of riding on the forklift.
4. Class 6: Electric and Internal Combustion Engine Tractors This classification includes forklifts that allow for a broad application use. In the electric forklift version, they are usually used for indoor use or dry outdoor use.

A list of forklift trucks that are typically powered by electricity are:

Sources of Electricity for Electric Forklifts Mostly, electric forklift models are used for interior applications on even, flat floors. Battery-powered forklifts are better suited for interior jobs as they do not emit poisonous gases; making them ideal for food-processing and healthcare applications. Forklifts that rely on fuel cells produce zero emissions, making them popular in refrigerated warehouses since their performance is not affected by lower temperatures the way batteries are.

Lead-acid battery Lead-acid batteries are the most commonly used type of rechargeable battery. Their capacity to supply high current surges allows for a significant ratio of power-to-weight. This, coupled with its affordability, make lead-acid batteries a popular option for use in electric forklift trucks. However, lead-acid batteries are susceptible to freezing in colder temperatures. They also require maintenance which, if ignored, can shorten the life of the battery.

Lithium-ion Battery A lithium-ion battery or li-ion battery is another type of rechargeable battery used in electric forklifts. The main issue with these batteries is they contain a flammable electrolyte and pose a safety hazard if damaged or charged improperly which may lead to fires or explosions. Additionally, Li-ion batteries cost more compared to lead-acid batteries initially; although they need zero maintenance and provide better efficiency compared to lead-acid batteries. Lithium-ion batteries are also able to operate over a greater temperature range with higher energy densities than lead-acid batteries.

Fuel Cell Forklifts with fuel-cell power showcase the benefits of both battery-operated forklift trucks and internal combustion models. Similar to battery-powered forklifts, there are no local emissions delivered from fuel cell models. One disadvantage is that fuel cell power efficiency is 40 to 50 percent which is about half the efficiency of lithium-ion batteries. Fuels cell power offers better energy density and provides electric forklift trucks to run longer. The fuel cell models perform better in colder environments compared to lithium-ion batteries. The fuel cell models are preferred for colder applications such as warehouses that are refrigerated. Different from batteries, fuel cells rely on refueling with a fuel source to create an electrical

current. While rechargeable batteries take a long time to recharge, fuel cells can be refilled in roughly three minutes. Because of this, large operations which run several shifts and larger fleets of forklifts tend to benefit from the ability to keep the forklift operating without having to account for lengthy charging times.

Pros and Cons of Electrically Powered Forklifts

Advantages of Electric Forklifts

When a lift capacity doesn't have to be greater than 12,000 lbs. electric forklift trucks are often a better option compared to combustion engine forklift trucks. Of course, there are many considerations to decide if the electric forklift model is the best choice for a particular application. It is necessary to discover the pros and cons of internal combustion engine forklift models versus electric forklift models prior to making a decision. Specific advantages of electric powered forklift models vs. internal combustion engine models are listed below.

1. The operating costs of battery-powered electric forklifts are significantly lower compared to internal combustion models since fuel costs continue to increase.
2. The price of electricity is usually more stable and predictable than combustible fuel. This makes electrical forklifts a benefit when considering budget needs for projected operating expenses.
3. Electric forklift trucks rely on recharging stations which eliminates the requirement of fuel transportation and storage for both the equipment and the job site.
4. Battery-powered electric forklift models and fuel cell electric forklifts generate no noise pollution or dangerous emissions. The only exception to this is the noise associated with the necessary back-up alarm. However, that is characteristic of internal combustion engine forklifts as well.
5. Operator equipment and fatigue is reduced in electric forklift models thanks to the automatic braking technology.
6. Electrical forklifts have longer intervals between maintenance than do internal combustion engine forklifts. This is largely due to the fewer moving parts required in a battery or fuel cell powered forklift.

Disadvantages of Electric Forklifts

For many of the reasons listed above, forklifts powered by electrical means have been more popular than power by internal combustion engines in recent years. Numerous circumstances however still prefer internal combustion forklifts. Key disadvantages of the electric forklifts in comparison to internal combustion engine are discussed below.

1. Electric forklifts feature a lifting capacity of around 12k lbs. or less, limiting them from heavier jobs. This translates to using an internal combustion forklift on jobs where there is limited heavy lifting required.
2. Battery powered electrical forklifts must be recharged and therefore require sufficient recharging stations to be installed at facilities where none are already present. This could amount to a significantly increased initial expense to the buyer.
3. Battery life can be affected by improper charging. They need to be regularly monitored to ensure they are not being charged too frequently or infrequently.
4. Electric forklift trucks cost more than internal combustion engine units.
5. In some older facilities, the electrical system may need to be upgraded to accommodate an increased voltage requirement of battery powered forklifts.
6. Battery-powered units may rely on machinery to lower and lift the heavy replacement batteries during replacement.

Overall, electric forklift trucks provide numerous advantages compared to internal combustion engines however, they may not work in a variety of outdoor applications with their weight and weather restrictions.