

Electric Forklift

Used Electric Forklift Lancaster - By definition, an electric forklift is a forklift truck which derives its power from an electric motor rather than an internal combustion engine. Electricity comes from a fuel cell or internal industrial batteries. If internal batteries provide the electrical source, the batteries can be recharged by joining the battery to something electrically compatible. Rechargeable battery options include lithium-ion or lead-acid. Electrical production with a fuel cell is close to a battery source but requires refueling to be recharged instead of connecting to an electrical source. Electrical forklifts perform the same types of jobs as internal combustion engine forklifts. Both models utilize two power horizontal forks to load, transport and unload items. The main difference between these different forklift models is their 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 These types of forklifts operate in very narrow aisles, where space is limited. This allows for maximum use of storage space. Class 2 forklifts have a modified design to minimize the amount of space taken up by the forklift.
3. Class 3: Electric Motor Hand or Hand-Rider Trucks These forklifts are hand-controlled, which means they do not ride on the forklift but rather is positioned in front of the forklift. The operator controls the forklift using a steering tiller.
4. Class 6: Electric and Internal Combustion Engine Tractors The Class 6 Internal Combustion Engine and Electric Tractors are another lineup. This category includes forklifts that can be utilized for many jobs. The electric units may be used in exterior applications in dry situations and also function well indoors. The types of forklift trucks that are usually electrically powered include: electric counterbalanced trucks, pallet jacks, scissor lifts, rider low lift trucks, order pickers, cushion tire forklifts, rider low stacker, reach truck, walkie low lift trucks, towing tractor trucks and walkie low stackers.

Sources of Electricity for Electric Forklifts

Electric forklift models are mainly used on even, flat surfaces indoors. Battery powered forklifts prevent the emission of harmful gases and are suggested for indoor facilities, such as healthcare and food-processing facilities. Fuel cell powered forklifts also produce no local emissions and are often used in refrigerated warehouses because, unlike batteries, their performance is not reduced by the lower temperatures.

Lead-acid battery

Lead-acid batteries are the most commonly used type of rechargeable battery. The battery's ability to produce high surge currents ensures a large power-to-weight ratio. These affordable models consistently make lead-acid models popular batteries for electrical forklifts. It's important to know that lead-acid batteries can possibly freeze during frigid temperatures and this type of battery requires on-going maintenance.

Lithium-ion Battery

A lithium-ion battery or li-ion battery is another type of rechargeable battery used in electric forklifts. Explosions or fires may result in these batteries if they are improperly charged or damaged due to the flammable electrolyte they contain. Lithium-ion batteries initially cost more than lead-acid varieties, but they provide better efficiency and require no maintenance compared to lead-acid models. Lithium-ion batteries are also able to operate over a greater temperature range with higher energy densities than lead-acid batteries.

Fuel Cell Forklifts

That rely on fuel-cell power feature some benefits of both internal combustion and battery-operated forklift trucks. 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. For this reason, fuel cell powered forklifts are often preferred for use in colder temperatures, such as refrigerated warehouses. Fuel cells need a fuel source in

order to create an electrical current and need refueling. Fuel cells only require approximately 3 minutes to refuel instead of the much longer recharging time for rechargeable batteries. Many larger companies that have multiple forklifts in their fleet running numerous shifts benefit from using fuel cell models that can keep operating without long periods of time spent charging.

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. Battery-powered electric forklift models have lower operating costs due to the increasing cost of fuel required constantly by internal combustion models.
2. Electricity costs are more predictable than fluctuating fuel costs. This makes electric forklifts a more reliable choice in terms of operating expenses and budgets.
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. Electrical forklifts, both battery and fuel cell powered, produce no emissions or noise pollution. 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 fatigue and equipment wear and tear are reduced in electric forklift models with the automatic braking system.
6. There are longer intervals between maintenance requirements for electric forklifts compared to internal combustion models due to less moving parts used by a battery-powered or a fuel cell unit.

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. There are numerous working conditions however that make electrical models less practical. Key disadvantages of the electric forklifts in comparison to internal combustion engine are discussed below.

1. Electric forklifts typically have a limited lifting capacity of approximately 12,000 pounds or less which eliminates them as an option from larger jobs. Sometimes this means an internal combustion engine forklift is chosen even for jobsites where heavy jobs are few and far between but still a requirement.
2. Electric forklifts rely on battery power and require recharging stations to be installed. If there are none at the facility, this could greatly increase the overall cost.
3. Batteries also require that attention be given to the timing and length of a charge. This is because the life of batteries can be reduced if charged too frequently or not enough.
4. Internal combustion engine forklifts are also less expensive compared to electric forklift models.
5. Certain older buildings may need to undergo electrical upgrades to accommodate increased voltage systems.
6. Battery-powered units may rely on machinery to lower and lift the heavy replacement batteries during replacement.

Electric forklift trucks have a wide range of benefits. They may not be adequate in certain working environments due to their weather and weight restrictions so check your job list accordingly.