

Electric Forklift

Used Electric Forklift Massachusetts - An electric forklift is a forklift truck that uses an electric motor to generate power as opposed to an internal combustion model. The electricity is sourced from either internal industrial batteries or fuel cell. If the electrical source is by means of internal batteries, the batteries are rechargeable by connecting the battery to a compatible electrical source. The rechargeable batteries are lithium-ion or lead-acid batteries. Producing electricity with a fuel cell is similar to using a battery source; however, the fuel cell needs refueling and will not be recharged from connecting to anything electrical. Internal combustion engine forklift models and electrical forklifts can complete the same types of jobs. That is, they usually use two power-operated horizontal forks to load, transport for short distances and unload materials. The source of power is the main difference between an internal combustion engine and an electrical forklift model. Electrically powered forklifts are typically used in warehouses and other indoor facilities where an internal combustion engine would cause poor air quality for workers.

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 The Class 1 Electric Motor Rider Trucks are one of the classifications. These models have cushion or pneumatic tires. Cushion tires are generally used on smooth indoor surfaces and pneumatic tires are mostly used for exterior applications.
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 The Class 6 Electric and Internal Combustion Engine Tractors are another classification. This includes models that can be used for broad application. The electric versions can be used outdoors in dry applications or used 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 Mostly, electric forklift models are used for interior applications on even, flat floors. Battery powered forklifts prevent the emission of harmful gases and are suggested for indoor facilities, such as healthcare and food-processing facilities. 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. The battery's ability to produce high surge currents ensures a large power-to-weight ratio. This, coupled with its affordability, make lead-acid batteries a popular option for use in electric forklift trucks. 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 Li-ion or lithium-ion battery is a different kind of rechargeable battery commonly used in electric forklift models. The main drawback of lithium-ion batteries is that they can be a safety hazard since they contain a flammable electrolyte that, if incorrectly charged or damaged can cause explosions and fires. 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. The Li-ion batteries can function with a broader temperature range compared to lead-acid batteries.

Fuel Cell Fuel-cell powered forklifts have some of the benefits of both battery operated forklifts and internal combustion engine forklifts. Fuel cell-powered forklifts provide no emissions like battery-powered forklift trucks. One of the fuel cell power disadvantages is that they are approximately half as efficient as li-ion batteries. Conversely, fuel cell power provides more energy density,

translating to longer running time for electric forklift trucks. Fuel cell powered forklifts also have the advantage of performing better in lower temperatures as lithium-ion batteries. The fuel cell models are preferred for colder applications such as warehouses that are refrigerated. Fuel cells are different from batteries in that they require a source of fuel to produce electrical current and so require refueling. While rechargeable batteries take a long time to recharge, fuel cells can be refilled in roughly three minutes. 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. Some of the advantages of an electrically powered forklift over an internal combustion engine are listed below.

1. Operating costs can be much lower for battery powered electrical forklifts because of the ongoing and often increasing cost of fuel.
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. Battery powered electric forklifts also allow for recharging at charging stations. This eliminates the necessity for fuel transportation and fuel storage, both at the worksite and onboard the forklift itself.
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 fatigue and equipment wear and tear are reduced in electric forklift models with the automatic braking system.
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 a variety of reasons, electric forklifts have become more popular in recent years over internal combustion models. 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 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. 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. 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. Electric forklift trucks cost more than internal combustion engine units.
5. Older facilities may require electrical upgrades for increased voltage systems to power battery 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.