

Forklifts: Check the Truck, Load and Route

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Why this matters

A familiar forklift may have a different attachment, a new defect or a changed route today. The inspection must match the actual truck and intended work before material moves.

Objective: Confirm truck readiness, load suitability and a usable route.

Key hazards or failure points

Defective brakes or steering; damaged forks; incompatible attachments; unknown capacity; unstable loads; weak surfaces; people in the travel path.

Practical controls

- Only trained, evaluated and authorized operators use the truck. Follow the actual model instructions and the employer's inspection process.
- Match the truck and attachment to readable capacity information and the planned load. Resolve unknown weight, configuration or suitability before handling.
- Plan the route, receiving position and pedestrian separation. Remove unsafe equipment from service and arrange authorized repair.

Verify It in the Field

Compare truck and attachment identification with the instructions and capacity information. Check the actual load and handling conditions; physical attachment fit does not prove approval.

The operator completes the prescribed visual and functional checks in a cleared, safe area. Check forks, retention, tires, leaks and applicable controls, restraints and warning devices. Record actual findings.

Walk or otherwise assess the route safely before moving. Confirm surface support, clearance, edges and separation arrangements. A completed form does not cancel an unresolved defect or blocked route.

Stop and reassess

Hold operation for a failed check, unreadable capacity information, unstable load, uncertain surface or loss of pedestrian separation. Isolate the defect, correct and recheck it, and rebrief changed work.

Ask the crew

1. Does the capacity information match this attachment?
2. Which function check proves this truck is ready?
3. Where can people enter our route?

A crew briefing does not qualify an operator or authorize repairs.

Sources: OSHA 1910.178 and 1926.602; truck and attachment instructions.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/forklift-pre-use-load-route-check