

Safety Facts: Electric Pallet Jack*



A pallet jack is the most basic form of forklift and is intended to move pallets in a warehouse or trailer setting. They can be either powered or manual. Formal training is required to operate Electric pallet jacks. They are technically called an electric motor hand truck (EMHT), as they have an electric motor to assist the operator in moving the hand truck. This reduces the strain caused by pushing and pulling a manual pallet jack.

Key characteristics

An EMHT has two forks that are inserted into the pallet. These forks can come in different lengths and widths from the factory. In some models of EMHT, the forks can be adjusted to change width of the forks to accommodate the size of the pallet. Some models of EMHT have forks that can extend and retract.

The EMHT has a handle that is used for steering the pallet jack. On the handle, you will find switches, buttons, levers, and other functions to help drive the machine, raise, and lower the forks and sound the horn.

There are different types of EMHT. Some EMHT you walk behind, other models you ride on. Some EMHT only lift to a low level just like a manual pallet jack while others lift to a high level and allow you to stack pallets on top of other pallets.

Associated risks/hazards

Both manual and electric pallet jacks have similar risks: workers can be injured if hands and feet get into the pinch point of the machine.

Another common risk is having unsecured products which can fall off the pallet jack and land onto workers.

With EMHT you can also have the danger of the propulsion system (batteries). Operators can drive the machine and pin themselves against a stationary object and the machine. EMHT can flip if turned quickly while being driven. The batteries can also explode if you do not properly recharge and maintain them.

Preventive next steps

Provide training to your EMHT operators that meets the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) 16.43 and CSA Standard B335-15.

Follow these dos and don'ts when using an EMHT:

- Always wear steel-toe footwear when operating an EMHT
- Keep hand and feet away from pinch point areas
- Do not operate a damaged or faulty EMHT
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for operating EMHT on slopes
- Do not carry a load that exceeds the rated capacity of the EMHT

- Ensure the load is stable before attempting to raise the forks or move the EMHT
- Do not drive an EMHT forward if your vision is blocked by the load
- Operate EMHT with caution around loading docks, inside trailers, and on powered tailgates
- Never allow passengers on your EMHT
- Lower the forks to the lowest height when the EMHT is not being used
- Inspect, service and maintain the EMHT as per the operator's manual and OHSR requirements



For additional resources visit:

[Occupational Health and Safety Regulation \(OHSR\) 16.43](#) Lift trucks

Electric Pallet Jack Toolbox Talk

Name of Facilitator: _____ **Date:** _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Employee feedback/questions/recommendations

[illegible]

Workers who attended

[illegible]

Key Talking Points (Facilitator Notes)