

Safety Facts: Manual Pallet Jacks*



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 operated manually or electrically. You must be trained and authorized before you use a pallet jack.

Key characteristics

A pallet jack has two forks that are inserted into the pallet. These forks can come in different lengths and widths. When purchasing a pallet jack, select the pallet jack that will fit the size of pallets being used in your workplace.

The pallet jack has a handle that is used for steering and pushing/pulling the pallet jack. Inside the handle you will find a control lever that is used in conjunction with the handle to raise the forks.



Associated risks/hazards

Workers can be injured if hands and feet get into pinch point areas of the pallet jack. Unsecured products can fall off the pallet jack and land onto workers.

Depending on the forces used to pull and push a pallet jack, workers can also develop musculoskeletal injuries (sprains and strains).

Preventive next steps

Training on using a manual pallet jack, as per the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) 4.10(2) should include:

- Identifying the parts of a pallet jack
- Identifying the pallet jack's capacity limit
- Locating and familiarizing with the pallet jack's operator's manual
- Explaining the pre-use inspection process including walk-around inspection, function test, and hazard assessment
- Demonstration and practice showing proper operating techniques
- Identifying the type of pallets that can be lifted with this pallet jack and the inspection process for the pallet and loads to determine if it is a safe load to move
- Reviewing all safe work procedures relating to this pallet jack

Follow these dos and don'ts when using a manual pallet jack:

- Always wear steel-toe footwear when operating a pallet jack
- Watch out for pinch point areas for both your hands and feet
- Do not operate a damaged or faulty pallet jack
- Do not use a manual pallet jack on a sloped surface (ramp) or non-hard packed surface e.g., gravel/dirt area
- Do not carry a load that exceeds the rated capacity of the pallet jack
- Ensure the load is stable before attempting to raise the forks or move the pallet jack
- Do not push a pallet jack forward if your vision is blocked by the load; it is preferable to push a pallet jack than to pull it
- Operate pallet jacks with caution around loading docks, inside trailers, and on powered tailgates
- Never allow passengers on your pallet jack or use it as a skateboard
- Lower the forks to the lowest height when the pallet jack is not being used



For additional resources visit:

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) 4.10 (2) Authorization

OHSR 16.43 (1)(a) CSA Standard B335-15 (R2020) Safety Standard for lift truck

Manual Pallet Jacks Toolbox Talk

Name of Facilitator: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Employee feedback/questions/recommendations

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Workers who attended

Name	Initial	Name	Initial
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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Key Talking Points (Facilitator Notes)
