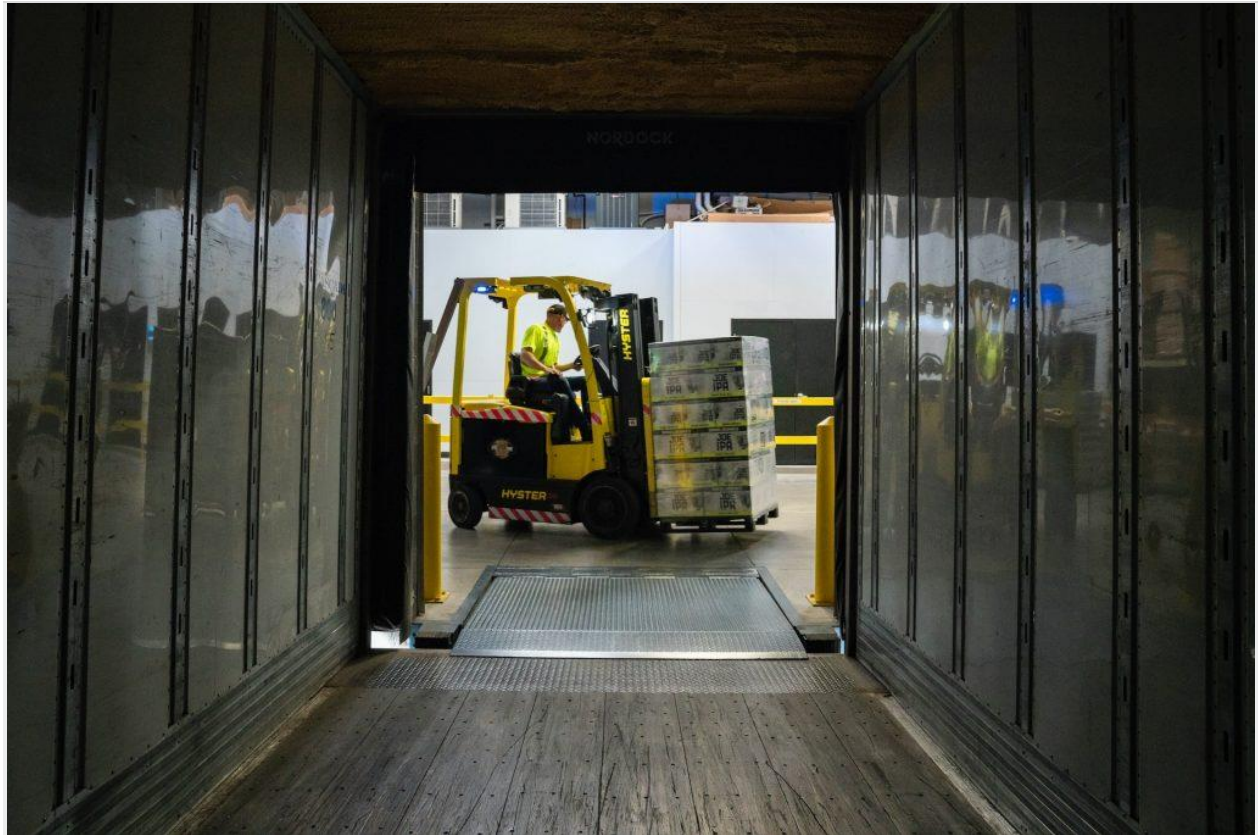


Do You Need a Forklift Licence? Spoiler: It Doesn't Exist!



Do you need a forklift license? We see this question a lot, and the simple answer is no. You do not need a license to use a forklift. Not only do you not need one, but you couldn't get one if you wanted one. Forklift Licenses technically don't exist. However, this doesn't mean anyone is free to operate a forklift. There are still rules and regulations surrounding their use, and you must undergo appropriate forklift operator training. They're incredibly useful pieces of machinery, but can also be dangerous. They can cause serious injury if misused, so should only be used by properly trained operators.

You may not require a license, but there is still much to know and do before operating a forklift. This guide will look at the health and safety regulations surrounding forklifts and what training is required to operate them.

The Basic Forklift Operator Requirements

Before we look at what training, qualifications and accreditations you may need to operate a forklift, we need to address a few basics. There is little point diving into the intricacies of forklift operator training if you may be ineligible to use a forklift for a much simpler reason.

How Old Must You Be To Use A Forklift?

The minimum age requirement to operate a forklift is minimum school leaving age (MSLA). This is outlined in the HSE Approved Code of Practice and Guidance, which states a forklift may be driven by someone of minimum school leaving age. However, there may be stricter requirements imposed by employers. Some employers may require you to be as old as 18 before permitting you to operate a forklift.

Are There Health Requirements To Drive A Forklift?

In addition to meeting the age requirements, you must be medically fit to operate heavy machinery. The full details around medical requirements are described in the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) rider-operated lift trucks approved code of practice (which replaces the HSG6 booklet). The fitness requirements are the same as those of a standard UK driving license (though you do not require a license) and include your levels of vision and hearing and risk of epileptic fits.

Who Is Responsible For Ensuring Safety In Forklift Operations?

Employers are given specific responsibilities in the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. PUWER regulations stipulate that employers must ensure employees working with equipment receive the appropriate training. Equipment training must cover the proper use of the equipment, the associated risks, and safety precautions. Employers also have to ensure that the correct equipment is being used for the intended purpose.

What Forklift Training Is Available?

At HL Training, we provide accredited forklift operator training for a wide variety of forklifts and types of lifter trucks. The Accrediting Bodies Association for Workplace Transport provides workplace transport groupings to categorise the many types of forklift and lift trucks available. We work with ABA lift truck categories and deliver training for equipment from across the various groupings.

Forklift training courses are available at different levels, from novice courses for beginners to experienced operator courses. In addition to the many operator courses available for the selection of machinery, there are also refresher and conversion courses. Refresher courses are a great way to stay up-to-date and ensure your skills remain sharp.

Conversion courses are also extremely useful. Available at an instructor's discretion, a conversion course builds on existing training for other types of forklifts. It can be a more efficient way to earn new accredited certificates for other lift trucks.

In addition to forklift operator training, we also deliver accredited forklift instructor training.

All HL Training forklift courses are designed to meet PUWER requirements and prepare learners to operate the particular machine in the workplace safely.

How Often Is Forklift Training Required?

Forklift refresher training courses are not legally required. However, HSG 136, which gives employers, managers and supervisors advice on regulatory compliance and risk reduction, recommends refresher training every 3-5 years.

What Forklift Accreditations Are Available?

There are a number of industry-recognised accreditors which cover forklift operator training. Our range of forklift operator and instructor training courses are all accredited by one of three accrediting bodies, ITSSAR, AITT, and RTITB.

What do you receive for completing an accredited course?

Upon completing one of our accredited forklift training courses, you will receive an accredited certificate. We also produce ITSSAR and AITT ID cards; RTITB ID cards are available through RTITB. These ID cards are often mistaken for forklift licenses and are a likely source of some of the confusion. Candidates are also registered on a nationally recognised database:

- AITT – ACORNS
- ITSSAR – TOPS
- RTITB – NORS

How Long Do Forklift Operator Certificates Last?

Accredited forklift certificates from the accreditors discussed do not expire – they are for life. However, if your certificate is for an RTITB course, your NORS registration will lapse. You are not required to renew your registration with NORS and may continue operating the appropriate forklift trucks at your employer's discretion. ACORNS and TOPS registrations do not technically expire, although refresher training is still recommended at the 3 to 5 year period.

You can renew your NORS registration with a refresher course. An employer may require you to refresh your registration to continue to drive a forklift. Even if an employer does not require it, refresher courses are still recommended.

Register For Accredited Forklift Training

If you want to upskill your workforce with accredited forklift operator or instructor training, get in touch with HL Training today. We deliver expert on-site and in-house forklift training accredited by the UK's top accrediting bodies. To speak to a team member, call us on 0117 952 5625 or complete a contact form.

Learn More About Operating Forklift And Workplace Safety

To learn more about safely operating forklifts in your workplaces, visit our blog. We have some helpful and informative guides, such as our recent guide to workplace safety, **"The Biggest Do's and Don'ts of Forklift Safety"**.