

Electric Forklift

Used Electric Forklift California - An electric forklift is a forklift truck that uses an electric motor to generate power as opposed to an internal combustion model. Electricity comes from a fuel cell or internal industrial batteries. If internal batteries provide the electrical source, the batteries can be recharged by joining the battery to something electrically compatible. 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. Electrical forklifts perform the same types of jobs as internal combustion engine forklifts. They both rely on two horizontal forks that are power supplied to transport and unload and load items for short distances. The main difference between these different forklift models is their source of power. 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 These forklifts can have pneumatic or cushion tires. Pneumatic tires are used on forklifts primarily operated outdoors in dry areas and on uneven surfaces whereas cushion tires are better on forklifts used primarily indoors, on smooth surfaces.
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 The Class 3 Electric Hand-Rider Trucks or Electric Motor Hand models are hand controlled. This means the operator uses a steering tiller and is positioned in front of the machine as opposed to riding on the forklift.
4. Class 6: Electric and Internal Combustion Engine Tractors The Class 6 Internal Combustion Engine and Electric Tractors are another lineup. This category includes forklifts that can be utilized for many jobs. The electric units may be used in exterior applications in dry situations and also function well indoors.

A list of forklift trucks that are typically powered by electricity are:

Sources of Electricity for Electric Forklifts Mostly, electric forklift models are used for interior applications on even, flat floors. Battery-powered forklifts are better suited for interior jobs as they do not emit poisonous gases; making them ideal for food-processing and healthcare applications. 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. Their capacity to supply high current surges allows for a significant ratio of power-to-weight. These affordable models consistently make lead-acid models popular batteries for electrical forklifts. 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 issue with these batteries is they contain a flammable electrolyte and pose a safety hazard if damaged or charged improperly which may lead to fires or explosions. 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 Forklifts that rely on fuel-cell power feature some benefits of both internal combustion and battery-operated forklift trucks. Like forklifts powered by battery, fuel cell power produces no local emissions. One disadvantage is that fuel cell power efficiency is 40 to 50 percent which is about half the efficiency of lithium-ion batteries. Fuel cell power offers better energy density and provides electric forklift trucks to run longer. Fuel cell forklift trucks operate better in cooler temperatures compared to li-ion battery models. The fuel cell models are preferred for colder applications such as warehouses that are refrigerated. Different from batteries, fuel cells rely on refueling with a fuel source to

create an electrical current. Fuel cells only require approximately 3 minutes to refuel instead of the much longer recharging time for rechargeable batteries. 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

Electric forklifts are often a popular choice compared to internal combustion models if the lifting capacity doesn't exceed 12,000 pounds. There are many factors to consider in each specific application in order to determine whether an electric forklift is the best option. 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. Battery-powered electric forklift models have lower operating costs due to the increasing cost of fuel required constantly by internal combustion models.
2. The cost of electricity is more predictable and more stable compared to combustible fuel; making electric forklifts a better choice when taking budgets and operating expenses into account.
3. Electric forklift trucks rely on recharging stations which eliminates the requirement of fuel transportation and storage for both the equipment and the job site.
4. Battery-powered electric forklift models and fuel cell electric forklifts generate no noise pollution or dangerous emissions. Both internal combustion engine forklifts and electric models have a back-up alarm that is noisy but necessary.
5. Operator equipment and fatigue is reduced in electric forklift models thanks to the automatic braking technology.
6. There are longer intervals between maintenance requirements for electric forklifts compared to internal combustion models due to less moving parts used by a battery-powered or a fuel cell unit.

Disadvantages of Electric Forklifts

For many of the reasons listed above, forklifts powered by electrical means have been more popular than power by internal combustion engines in recent years. There are numerous working conditions however that make electrical models less practical. Key disadvantages of the electric forklifts in comparison to internal combustion engine are discussed below.

1. Since electric forklifts have a lift capacity of approximately 12,000 lbs. many jobs still choose to use an internal combustion model where there are heavy lifting requirements, even when they are only occasionally needed.
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 need to be monitored to ensure adequate timing regarding how long they are charged. This is important since battery life can be reduced if they are charged too frequently or infrequently.
4. Electric forklift trucks are also initially more expensive than internal combustion engine forklifts.
5. Certain older buildings may need to undergo electrical upgrades to accommodate increased voltage systems.
6. Battery powered forklifts sometimes require machinery to lift or lower the heavy batteries when replacement of batteries is necessary.

All in all, electric forklifts have many advantages over internal combustion engine forklifts but still are not appropriate in many outdoor applications, mostly due to weather and weight restrictions.