

IS YOUR LIFT TRUCK BEING USED SAFELY?



Is your lift truck a danger?

Lift trucks (LTs) - the workhorses of many companies in Northern Ireland, are involved in a disproportionately high number of fatal accidents at work. Deaths are most frequently caused by the lift truck overturning, trapping the driver underneath.

Even an unladen truck, travelling at walking speed on an even surface, can overturn if it is cornered too quickly.

The secret of using LTs safely is good management.

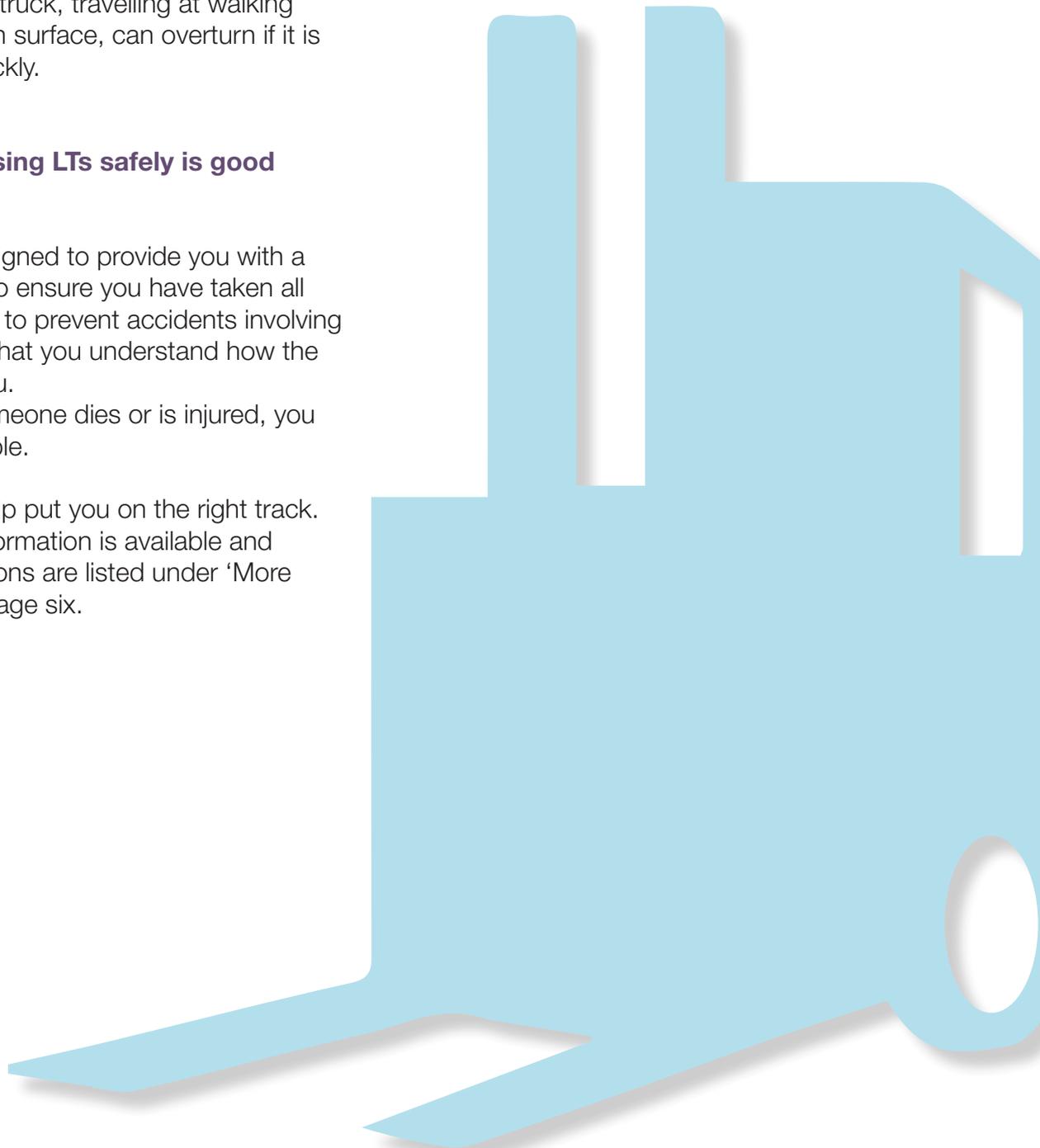
This leaflet is designed to provide you with a handy checklist to ensure you have taken all reasonable steps to prevent accidents involving LTs at work and that you understand how the law applies to you.

Remember, if someone dies or is injured, you could be held liable.

This guide will help put you on the right track. More detailed information is available and relevant publications are listed under 'More information' on page six.

The main causes of accidents include:

- lack of training for drivers
- inadequate premises and
- poor maintenance of LTs



Is your lift truck being used safely?

- 1.** Lift trucks (LTs) are involved in a disproportionately high number of workplace fatal accidents. They are the workhorse of virtually every type of workplace and their use is increasing. The most common cause of death in recent years in Northern Ireland has been due to the driver being crushed between the LT and the ground when the truck has overturned.
(Rider-operated lift trucks - Operator training and safe use, ACOP L117)
- 2.** An unladen counter balance LT with the forks lowered can overturn if it is turned too quickly, even when travelling at walking speed, on an even surface. In other words it can overturn relatively easily even in one of its most stable configurations.
- 3.** The main reasons why accidents happen include lack of driver training, inadequate premises and poor maintenance of LTs.
- 4.** The secret of safe use of LTs is good management.
- 5.** For more detailed information see the publications listed under 'More information' on page six.

CASE STUDY

In January 2016 a Northern Ireland company was fined £24,000 plus legal costs for a fatal forklift truck accident. The employee was fatally injured when the forklift truck he was driving overturned, trapping him between the vehicle's safety frame and the ground. The employee was not a forklift truck operator and had not been trained on the operation of lift trucks by the company.

Are you taking the right steps or is there a fatal accident waiting to happen?

THE DRIVER:

- 6.** Have your drivers been selected because they are reliable and have the ability to do the job in a responsible manner?
- 7.** Have they a reasonable degree of both physical and mental fitness?
- 8.** In cases where disability is potentially relevant, medical advice should be obtained.
- 9.** How do you ensure no one drives a LT, even occasionally, unless they have been adequately trained and authorised to do so?
- 10.** Have your drivers been trained to the standard described in the HSE publication "Rider-operated lift trucks - Operator training and safe use"?
- 11.** The Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) has legal status. If employers do not follow it they will be found at fault if they are prosecuted and cannot show that they have complied with the law in some other way.
- 12.** The guidance illustrates good practice and following it will normally be enough to secure compliance with the law.

13. Operator training should always include three stages:

Basic training:

The basic skills and knowledge required to operate a lift truck safely and efficiently.

Specific job training:

Knowledge and understanding of the operating principles and controls of the lift truck to be used and how it will be used in their workplace.

Familiarisation training:

Applying what has been learnt, under normal working conditions, on the job under close supervision.

Basic and specific training can be combined but should take place off the job.

14. For basic training a trainee: Instructor: LT ratio of 2:1:1 is probably ideal, but in any case the ratio should not exceed 3:1:1 except for lecture sessions. As a rough guide the normal length of a course for novice operators would be five days. Drivers with some experience of LTs may need less extensive training, but the value of such experience should not be over estimated.

15. Selection of competent instructors who provide a good standard of training is essential. HSENI recommend the use of an accredited training provider to ensure that the training provided is to the standards outlined in the L117 ACOP. It is however not a legal requirement for instructors to be accredited.

16. Have you given drivers of lift trucks written authorisation to drive those trucks for which they have successfully completed training?

17. Are there arrangements to ensure that keys are never left in unattended LTs, to prevent them being used by unauthorised persons?

18. Are managers / supervisors trained sufficiently to recognise safe and unsafe practices?

19. Have you arrangements in place to provide further training when, for example, unsafe work practices have been identified, there has been an accident or near miss, there has been a change in the working practice or if drivers are required to drive a LT they are not familiar with?

20. Unlike cars the controls on lift trucks are not designed to a standard configuration.

The lift truck

21. Are your new LTs designed to current state of the art safety standards which meet essential legal health and safety requirements? Are they “CE marked” and accompanied by a ‘declaration of conformity’ stating what European Community Directives they comply with and whether certain European Safety Standards have been used?

22. Have you been supplied with the manufacturer’s instructions for use including, for example, maintenance and training requirements, in English?

23. Are your LTs, whether new or in existing use, fitted with means to protect the driver from being crushed between the truck and the ground if the truck should overturn? This usually takes the form of a seatbelt. In most cases when the risk has been compared with the low cost of fitting and wearing a seatbelt this should be identified by management as a high priority for action.

24. Do you use your LTs to enable people to work at heights?

25. LTs are primarily designed for materials handling. When it is not reasonably practicable to use safer purpose-built equipment, such as a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP), it may be safer to use a CE marked working platform which meets the essential health and safety requirements of the law, for work of short duration at heights.

26. Have you a system for reporting faults and ensuring repairs are done?

27. Is maintenance carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions?

28. Do the instructions state what periodic inspection and maintenance is required on, for example, a daily or weekly basis?

29. Are statutory examinations carried out at least every 12 months, or in the case of LTs and working platforms used for lifting people at least every 6 months, and in either case, in accordance with an examination scheme?

The premises

30. LTs are relatively easy to overturn, due to their high centre of gravity and narrow wheeltrack, even on a flat surface at walking speed if steered too quickly. Surfaces should be well maintained and be free from potholes and unnecessary kerbs.

31. Premises should be planned so that the layout enables pedestrians to be separated from vehicles such as LTs. Many accidents occur during reversing. Where possible one way systems should be used. By necessity LTs spend a lot of time in reverse so the importance of keeping pedestrians away is paramount. Visibility should be good and lighting adequate.

The task

32. Do you always ensure that the correct LT and lifting attachment is selected for any given job?

33. Are all routine and non-routine jobs planned; always taking into account the weight, shape and stability of the load and the working conditions?

34. Do your drivers have information on the rated capacity of your LTs, safe stacking heights for pallet loads and safe working loads of racking?

35. Are reliable systems of work in place for work at loading bays to prevent vehicles being moved during loading / unloading?

36. Are there rules, which are actively enforced, prohibiting carriage of passengers on LTs?

37. Are there rules, which are actively enforced, governing safe use of working platforms?

38. When a suitable LT and working platform have been selected, safe systems of work should be followed. These should include, for example, ensuring that the working platform is properly secured to the LT and that the tilting mechanism cannot be moved when the working platform is raised.

39. Excessive noise levels which prevent the driver and the person on the platform communicating clearly may make the risk unacceptable.

40. Working platforms are not suitable for transferring goods or people from one level to another.

The law

41. The following list gives a brief guide to the main law applicable to the supply and use of lift trucks.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1978

42. Duties of employers to their employees; duties of employers and the self-employed to those who may be affected by their undertaking. Duties of manufacturers and suppliers. Duties of employees to take care of themselves and others and not to interfere or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

PROVISION AND USE OF WORK EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1999

43. Suitability of work equipment; maintenance; inspection; information and instructions; training; conformity with Community requirements; controls for starting or making a significant change in operating conditions and overturning of lift trucks.

LIFTING OPERATIONS AND LIFTING EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1999

44. Application, including operator protection from the weather; lifting equipment for lifting persons; making of lifting equipment; organisation of lifting operations; thorough examination and inspection; reports and defects and keeping of information.

THE SUPPLY OF MACHINERY (SAFETY) REGULATIONS 2008 as amended

45. Duties of suppliers.

WORKPLACE (HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1993

46. Condition of floors and traffic routes and organisation and suitability of traffic routes.

MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2000

47. Risk assessment, health and safety arrangements, appointment of competent personnel to assist with health and safety requirements, co-operation and co-ordination between employers.

More information

Rider-operated lift trucks - operator training and safe use, ACOP L117, 3rd Edition 2013
ISBN 978 0 7176 6441 2

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l117.pdf>

Working platforms (non-integrated) on forklift trucks, Guidance Note PM28, 4th Edition 2000
ISBN 0 7176 1233 3

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/pm28.pdf>

A guide to workplace transport safety, HSG136, 3rd Edition 2014

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg136.pdf>

The safe use of vehicles on construction sites, HSG 144, 2nd Edition 2009
ISBN 978 0 7176 6291 3

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg144.pdf>

Pallet safety, PM15, 4th Edition 2014

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/pm15.pdf>

Safe use of work equipment, ACOP L22, 4th Edition 2014

ISBN 978 0 7176 6619 5

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l22.htm>

Safe use of lifting equipment, ACOP L113, 3rd Edition 2014

ISBN 978 0 7176 6586 0

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l113.pdf>

Workplace health, safety and welfare, ACOP L24, 2nd Edition 2013

ISBN 978 0 7176 6583 9

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l24.pdf>

Safety of industrial trucks. Self-propelled variable reach trucks

BS EN 1459:1998+A3:2012

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