

Electric Forklift

Used Electric Forklift Kansas - By definition, an electric forklift is a forklift truck which derives its power from an electric motor rather than an internal combustion engine. The electricity source is derived from either a fuel cell or internal industrial batteries. Internal batteries often provide the electrical source. They are capable of being recharged by connecting the battery to a source that is electrically compatible. The rechargeable batteries are lithium-ion or lead-acid batteries. Electrical production by means of a fuel cell is similar to a battery source but cannot be recharged by connecting to an electrical source, instead requiring refueling. Electrical forklifts can do the same type of work 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 only substantial difference between an electrical forklift and an internal combustion engine forklift is the 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 These types of forklifts operate in very narrow aisles, where space is limited. This allows for maximum use of storage space. Class 2 forklifts have a modified design to minimize the amount of space taken up by the forklift.
3. Class 3: Electric Motor Hand or Hand-Rider Trucks Another classification is the Class 3 Electric Motor Hand or Hand-Rider Trucks. These machines are hand-controlled. The operator is positioned in front of the machine and relies on a steering tiller instead of riding on the forklift.
4. Class 6: Electric and Internal Combustion Engine Tractors The Class 6 Electric and Internal Combustion Engine Tractors are another classification. This includes models that can be used for broad application. The electric versions can be used outdoors in dry applications or used indoors. The types of forklift trucks that are usually electrically powered include: electric counterbalanced trucks, pallet jacks, scissor lifts, rider low lift trucks, order pickers, cushion tire forklifts, rider low stacker, reach truck, walkie low lift trucks, towing tractor trucks and walkie low stackers.

Sources of Electricity for Electric Forklifts Electric forklifts are predominantly used indoors on flat, even surfaces. 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. Refrigerated jobs prefer to use fuel cell forklifts. They make no emissions and are capable of working in colder locations without a power reduction, unlike battery-operated models.

Lead-acid battery The most popular type of rechargeable battery is lead-acid models. 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. However, lead-acid batteries are susceptible to freezing in colder temperatures. They also require maintenance which, if ignored, can shorten the life of the battery.

Lithium-ion Battery Another type of rechargeable battery used in electric forklift trucks is lithium-ion or li-ion batteries. 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. Lithium-ion batteries are also more expensive than lead-acid batteries, at least initially. However, they provide more efficiency than lead-acid batteries and require no maintenance. Lithium-ion batteries are also able to operate over a greater temperature range with higher energy densities than lead-acid batteries.

Fuel Cell Forklifts with fuel-cell power showcase the benefits of both battery-operated forklift trucks and internal combustion models. 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. Fuels cell power offers better energy density and provides electric forklift trucks to run longer. Fuel cell powered forklifts also have the

advantage of performing better in lower temperatures as lithium-ion batteries. Refrigerated warehouses rely on fuel cell models due to their ability to function in cooler locations. Different from batteries, fuel cells rely on refueling with a fuel source to create an electrical current. While rechargeable batteries take a long time to recharge, fuel cells can be refilled in roughly three minutes. 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

When a lift capacity doesn't have to be greater than 12,000 lbs. electric forklift trucks are often a better option compared to combustion engine forklift trucks. Of course, there are many considerations to decide if the electric forklift model is the best choice for a particular application. It is essential to discover the pros and cons of one forklift type to another prior to choosing a model. 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. There are recharging stations for battery-powered electric forklift. This system eliminates the necessity for fuel storage and transportation for both the machine and the worksite.
4. Both fuel cell and battery-powered electric forklifts produce zero noise pollution or emissions. The back-up alarm is the main exception; however, this is a normal characteristic of internal combustion forklifts as well.
5. The automatic braking systems on electrical forklifts helps to reduce wear and operator fatigue.
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 a variety of reasons, electric forklifts have become more popular in recent years over internal combustion models. There are numerous working conditions however that make electrical models less practical. Some of the disadvantages the electrical forklift has when compared to internal combustion engine forklifts are set out below.

1. Electric forklifts feature a lifting capacity of around 12k lbs. or less, limiting them from heavier jobs. This translates to using an internal combustion forklift on jobs where there is limited heavy lifting required.
2. Electric forklifts rely on battery power and require recharging stations to be installed. If there are none at the facility, this could greatly increase the overall cost.
3. Batteries also require that attention be given to the timing and length of a charge. This is because the life of batteries can be reduced if charged too frequently or not enough.
4. Internal combustion engine forklifts are also less expensive compared to electric forklift models.
5. Older facilities may require electrical upgrades for increased voltage systems to power battery forklifts.
6. Electric forklift trucks may need to use machinery to lift and lower the batteries into the unit during replacement due to their heavy nature.

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.