

Electric Forklift

Used Electric Forklift El Monte - An electric forklift is a forklift truck that uses an electric motor to generate power as opposed to an internal combustion model. The electricity source is derived from either a fuel cell or internal industrial batteries. If the electrical source is by means of internal batteries, the batteries are rechargeable by connecting the battery to a compatible electrical source. The rechargeable batteries are lithium-ion or lead-acid batteries. Electrical production with a fuel cell is close to a battery source but requires refueling to be recharged instead of connecting to an electrical source. Electrical forklifts perform the same types of jobs as internal combustion engine forklifts. That is, they usually use two power-operated horizontal forks to load, transport for short distances and unload materials. The main difference between these different forklift models is their source of power. Typically, electric forklift models are used indoors in warehouses and similar facilities that cannot rely on internal combustion engines due to interior air quality.

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 The Class 1 Electric Motor Rider Trucks are one of the classifications. These models have cushion or pneumatic tires. Cushion tires are generally used on smooth indoor surfaces and pneumatic tires are mostly used for exterior applications.
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 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.

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 Mostly, electric forklift models are used for interior applications on even, flat floors. Battery powered forklifts prevent the emission of harmful gases and are suggested for indoor facilities, such as healthcare and food-processing facilities. 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 main type of rechargeable battery is lead-acid batteries. The battery's ability to produce high surge currents ensures a large power-to-weight ratio. Electric forklift trucks rely on lead-acid batteries that are affordable and durable. 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. 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. Another benefit is that the lithium-ion batteries can operate with a wider temperature range and better energy densities compared to lead-acid varieties.

Fuel Cell Forklifts with fuel-cell power showcase the benefits of both battery-operated forklift trucks and internal combustion models. Fuel cell-powered forklifts provide no emissions like battery-powered forklift trucks. One of the fuel cell power disadvantages is that they are approximately half as efficient as li-ion batteries. Conversely, fuel cell power provides more energy density, translating to longer running time for electric forklift trucks. Fuel cell forklift trucks operate better in cooler temperatures compared to li-ion battery models. For this reason,

fuel cell powered forklifts are often preferred for use in colder temperatures, such as refrigerated warehouses. Fuel cells need a fuel source in order to create an electrical current and need refueling. While rechargeable batteries take a long time to recharge, fuel cells can be refilled in roughly three minutes. It is beneficial for businesses that rely on many forklifts that operate numerous shifts to use fuel cell models since they don't have the same downtime for charging batteries.

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. There are many factors to consider in each specific application in order to determine whether an electric forklift is the best option. It is essential to discover the pros and cons of one forklift type to another prior to choosing a model. Certain advantages of the different types of forklift models are discussed below.

1. The operating costs of battery-powered electric forklifts are significantly lower compared to internal combustion models since fuel costs continue to increase.
2. The price of electricity is usually more stable and predictable than combustible fuel. This makes electrical forklifts a benefit when considering budget needs for projected operating expenses.
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. Both fuel cell and battery-powered electric forklifts produce zero noise pollution or emissions. The only exception to this is the noise associated with the necessary back-up alarm. However, that is characteristic of internal combustion engine forklifts as well.
5. Operator equipment and fatigue is reduced in electric forklift models thanks to the automatic braking technology.
6. Electrical forklifts have longer intervals between maintenance than do internal combustion engine forklifts. This is largely due to the fewer moving parts required in a battery or fuel cell powered forklift.

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. 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. 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 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. Certain older buildings may need to undergo electrical upgrades to accommodate increased voltage systems.
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.