

Electric Forklift

Used Electric Forklift San Jose - 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. If internal batteries provide the electrical source, the batteries can be recharged by joining the battery to something electrically compatible. These rechargeable batteries are lead-acid or lithium-ion battery. 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. Both models utilize two power horizontal forks to load, transport and unload items. The only substantial difference between an electrical forklift and an internal combustion engine forklift is the source of power. Most electric forklift models are used for internal applications including warehouses and similar locations that cannot function with compromised 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 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 This classification includes forklifts that allow for a broad application use. In the electric forklift version, they are usually used for indoor use or dry outdoor use.

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

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. 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

A lithium-ion battery or li-ion battery is another type of rechargeable battery used in electric forklifts. Explosions or fires may result in these batteries if they are improperly charged or damaged due to the flammable electrolyte they contain. 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

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 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. The fuel cell models perform better in colder environments compared to 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. Fuel cells only require approximately 3 minutes to refuel instead of the much longer recharging time for rechargeable batteries. 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. Of course, there are many considerations to decide if the electric forklift model is the best choice for a particular application. It is necessary to discover the pros and cons of internal combustion engine forklift models versus electric forklift models prior to making a decision. Specific advantages of electric powered forklift models vs. internal combustion engine models are listed below.

1. Operating costs can be much lower for battery powered electrical forklifts because of the ongoing and often increasing cost of fuel.
2. Electricity costs are more predictable than fluctuating fuel costs. This makes electric forklifts are more reliable choice in terms of operating expenses and budgets.
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. Electrical forklifts, both battery and fuel cell powered, produce no emissions or noise pollution. The back-up alarm is the main exception; however, this is a normal characteristic of internal combustion forklifts as well.
5. Operator fatigue and equipment wear and tear are reduced in electric forklift models with the automatic braking system.
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. Numerous circumstances however still prefer internal combustion forklifts. Some of the disadvantages the electrical forklift has when compared to internal combustion engine forklifts are set out below.

1. Electric forklifts typically have a limited lifting capacity of approximately 12,000 pounds or less which eliminates them as an option from larger jobs. Sometimes this means an internal combustion engine forklift is chosen even for jobsites where heavy jobs are few and far between but still a requirement.
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. Electric forklift trucks are also initially more expensive than internal combustion engine forklifts.
5. In some older facilities, the electrical system may need to be upgraded to accommodate an increased voltage requirement of battery powered forklifts.
6. Battery powered forklifts sometimes require machinery to lift or lower the heavy batteries when replacement of batteries is necessary.

Overall, electric forklift trucks provide numerous advantages compared to internal combustion engines however, they may not work in a variety of outdoor applications with their weight and weather restrictions.