Electric Pallet Jacks Meeting Kit



What’s At Stake

Electric walkie pallet jacks are excellent tools for mid-range runs, unloading deliveries, and stocking products in retail settings. They fill an important role alongside forklifts and other powered industrial equipment. While they may seem like less powerful machines compared to large forklifts, walkies can quickly and easily move loads weighing thousands of pounds. Like all equipment, they must be handled carefully and effectively by trained and certified operators.

PALLET JACKS – THE PREFERRED MACHINE FOR ORDER PICKING AND CARGO MANAGEMENT

Pallet jacks don’t look anything like a forklift. OSHA puts them in the same category of “powered industrial truck.” That’s where the similarities end. The most significant difference between the two is how they move cargo. Forklifts hoist pallets and other cargo onto warehouse shelves. Pallet jacks only lift pallets a few inches off the ground.

Designed to lift pallets high enough for ground clearance only, pallet jacks are simple to operate. First, the operator secures a pallet on the forks. Then embedded wheels lift the forks up a few inches, allowing the pallet jack to move.

In warehouses, pallet jacks are the truck of choice for “order picking.” This is the process of placing items on a pallet jack to fill customer orders. Once an order is complete, the operator usually wraps the pallets in clear plastic. This prevents items from falling off. Then, the pallets are dropped off in a truck or placed near a dock.

What’s the Danger

HAZARDS/DANGERS OF PALLET JACK USE

Accidents occur when the operator:

- Doesn’t take pallet jack safety seriously
- Exceeds weight limitations
- Doesn’t follow safety protocols
- Doesn’t properly balance pallets on the forks
- Ignores potential hazards in the work environment
- Operates the pallet jack in a careless or unsafe manner

TYPES OF PALLET ACCIDENTS

- A worker was fatally crushed by a falling load.

- A worker had four toes on his left foot amputated due to a paljackslet jack accident.
- Other pallet jack workers have suffered crushed legs and bones broken.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

BEST PRACTICES TO AVOID ACCIDENTS

1. **Put a plan in place, and train for it**

That starts with examining unique risk factors and laying out a plan to ensure any potential hazards are avoided. Once that information has been compiled, workers need the proper education and managers have to make sure they are following their training to the letter.

1. **Inspect the jack before every use**

One critical area for safety here is making sure a pallet jack is safe. Look it over carefully any time it’s loaded or unloaded. While the likelihood that things are going to change from one day to the next is low, over time, a lack of inspections could lead workers to miss a loosening wheel or problems with the pneumatic lift that could lead to an accident.

1. **Avoid inclines whenever possible**

Using a pallet jack on an incline is not usually advisable. Slopes will increase the risk of an accident because it becomes more difficult for operators to maintain control of the jack.

1. **Pull, don’t push**

It’s vital for workers to pull the pallet jack whenever possible. Pushing the equipment may make it less maneuverable and increases the risk of running into something when going around a corner that you couldn’t have seen.

1. **Don’t let extremities get under it**

One of the biggest risks around a pallet jack is the one related to having hands or feet get stuck under it as it lowers, so workers must always be conscious of where they’re standing or placing their hands around its forks. While most efforts to raise or lower the jack will go off without a hitch, employees can’t risk the chance that it will fail and come crashing down with disastrous consequences.

1. **Watch out for ‘pinch points’**

When turning the jack one way or the other, workers need to be aware of the places where the “pinch” motion could catch their hands or feet. Avoiding the risk is common-sense but nonetheless, hurried work and inattention can lead to otherwise avoidable accidents.

BEST PALLET JACK PRACTICES

- Prior to operating an electric pallet jack, always fill out the pre-operation inspection sheet. This will ensure you are using an electric power jack that is in good mechanical condition. If the electric power jack does not pass the pre-operation inspection, do not use it and report the malfunctioning equipment to your supervisor immediately.
- Always be cautious of the wide swing of the electric power jack. Keep your body, especially your feet and ankles clear of the jack.
- When operating the electric pallet jack always face the direction of travel, do not walk backwards.
- An electric pallet jack should never be operated on a ramp.

- The red button on the operation handle is an emergency reverse. This button will prevent the electric pallet jack from running you over.
- The electric pallet jack, with a full load, can weigh as much as a car. You cannot stop, push, or drag the electric pallet jack. Never use your body to stop the electric pallet jack.

FINAL WORD

The electric pallet jack is designed for lifting and moving material loads over relatively short distances in a number of material handling applications on loading docks, distribution centers and in warehouses.