

Electric Forklift

Used Electric Forklift Modesto - Electric forklift models do not rely on combustion engines but use an electric motor instead. Electricity comes from 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. 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. They both rely on two horizontal forks that are power supplied to transport and unload and load items for short distances. The main difference between these different forklift models is their 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 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 The Class 2 Electric Motor Narrow Aisle Trucks are another classification. These units function within very narrow aisle locations with limited space. This design enables maximum storage space. Class 2 models feature a modified design to limit the amount of space the forklift takes up.
3. Class 3: Electric Motor Hand or Hand-Rider Trucks These forklifts are hand-controlled, which means they do not ride on the forklift but rather is positioned in front of the forklift. The operator controls the forklift using a steering tiller.
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. Fuel cell powered forklifts also produce no local emissions and are often used in refrigerated warehouses because, unlike batteries, their performance is not reduced by the lower temperatures.

Lead-acid battery

Lead-acid batteries are the most commonly used type of rechargeable battery. Their capacity to supply high current surges allows for a significant ratio of power-to-weight. This, coupled with its affordability, make lead-acid batteries a popular option for use in electric forklift trucks. Lead-acid batteries require maintenance and may freeze during colder temperatures. These factors can shorten their lifespan.

Lithium-ion Battery

Another type of rechargeable battery used in electric forklift trucks is lithium-ion or li-ion batteries. The main drawback of lithium-ion batteries is that they can be a safety hazard since they contain a flammable electrolyte that, if incorrectly charged or damaged can cause explosions and fires. 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

Fuel-cell powered forklifts have some of the benefits of both battery operated forklifts and internal combustion engine forklifts. Similar to battery-powered forklifts, there are no local emissions delivered from fuel cell models. Fuel cell power efficiency is only forty to fifty percent which is roughly half as much as 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. For this reason, fuel cell powered forklifts are often preferred

for use in colder temperatures, such as refrigerated warehouses. 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. Numerous factors are considered to determine if the electric forklift truck is the most accurate choice. It is essential to discover the pros and cons of one forklift type to another prior to choosing a model. 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. 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. Electrical forklifts, both battery and fuel cell powered, produce no emissions or noise pollution. 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 fatigue and equipment wear and tear are reduced in electric forklift models with the automatic braking system.
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 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. Certain electric forklift models disadvantages as compared to combustion models are listed 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. Battery life can be affected by improper charging. They need to be regularly monitored to ensure they are not being charged too frequently or infrequently.
4. Electric forklift trucks are also initially more expensive than internal combustion engine forklifts.
5. Certain older buildings may need to undergo electrical upgrades to accommodate increased voltage systems.
6. Battery powered forklifts sometimes require machinery to lift or lower the heavy batteries when replacement of batteries is necessary. 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.