

# Competence of Operators

Competent lift truck operators must know not only how to operate the particular class of truck to which they have been assigned but also be aware of hazards associated with the work they have been asked to do; they must be able to operate the truck in a manner that protects both their own safety and the safety of others in their workplace. It is the responsibility of the employer to establish a worker's competence to operate a powered lift truck.

A "competent" operator should understand:

- the sections of the OSHA and regulations applicable to the work;
- the hazards associated with the work, including the principles of operation and features of the lift truck, workplace conditions and environment, and activities that pose actual or potential danger to health and safety in the workplace;
- the manufacturer's specifications as they relate to the safe operation and load handling for the class or type of truck that is to be operated; and
- the workplace-specific procedures and practices that have been established for ensuring worker safety.

A "competent" operator should be able to perform, with the truck to be operated and under typical workplace conditions, the following procedures in a manner consistent with established competence standards:

- pre-operational check;
- start-up and shut-down;
- general operation: stopping, starting, turning, driving forward and in reverse, parking, operating around personnel;
- load handling: selection and security of loads, pick-up and placement, personnel lifting, stacking and restocking;
- loading and unloading: transport vehicles, structures, elevators; and
- operational maintenance: refuelling, recharging (where appropriate).

The employer should be satisfied that the truck operator has demonstrated the foregoing skills to a person with expert knowledge on the safe operation of powered lift trucks. A safety association (see [Appendix V](#)) or the lift truck manufacturer may be contacted for information on institutions, agencies or persons with expert knowledge of lift trucks.

Employers should maintain in the workplace a record of workers competent to operate powered lift trucks. For each worker, the record should indicate the skills and knowledge successfully demonstrated, the class or classes of truck on which he or she was assessed, the name and affiliation of the assessor and the date the assessment was done. Employers may issue certificates to facilitate identification of competent operators.