

Every piece of material handling equipment is vital to operations and movement of the product. The frequency of service should be based on the hours of usage and the environment in which it is being used.

Regular (or Preventative) maintenance contributes to the safe operation of the machines and according to OSHA, any lift truck that is seen as “unsafe to operate” should be locked out/tagged out and removed from service. The original manufacturer’s instructions should always be consulted when performing maintenance. A forklift is deemed unsafe if any of the following are found:

- Forks show defects – cracks, shank is not straight, fork angle is not straight, difference in height of fork tips, blade wear, positioning lock not in working order, fork hooks wear, or marking not legible
- Any original safety equipment is not functioning correctly
- Welds are broken anywhere on the machine
- Tires are low on air or are missing pieces of rubber
- Any kind of oil leak is visible
- Damage to the overhead guard
- Gauges are not functioning properly
- Safety or informational decals are not readable

The maintenance interval is measured by two methods:

1. Days or months of operation
2. Hours on the meter (this has become confused by the manufacturers utilizing multiple meters – key switch, operator sensing, drive motor, pump motor, etc.). The most commonly used for reference is the “operator sensing system” which is a seat switch or pedal switch on a stand up unit.

Here are some important items to consider when servicing your fleet

- All work should be performed in a clean and safe area
- Make sure that the engine is off or the battery is disconnected
- Block the wheels and set the emergency brake
- Change engine oil and filter per manufacture’s schedule
- Change air filters (cleaning is often not recommended)
- Grease all fittings correctly, excessive grease can cause as much damage as none
- Replace hydraulic oil as recommended by the manufacturer
- Batteries must be filled *after* charging to avoid spillage – use alkaline fluid to clean
- Pneumatic tires should always have proper air pressure to avoid damage
- Inspect chains (and anchors) for elongation, rust, protrusion, cracking, and misalignment



Forklift Maintenance

It is required by OSHA that you have your operators utilize a daily check list and provide that to your technician for him to use as a reference for needed repairs. Be sure to keep a copy on file of the daily check list and the explanation of any repairs to present to OSHA if requested.

If you decide to use an outside company to service your forklifts, research their service system, their response time, their call completion logs, and their references to ensure that they are dependable and that their technicians are fully trained.

Remember: Safety first when working with or on any piece of material handling equipment