



FORKLIFT CAPACITY HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

How do you know that the quotes you've recently received for a new or used forklift will meet your needs and provide you with a lift truck that has enough capacity to do the job safely?

For example, a 6,000 lb load needs a 6,000 lb capacity forklift, right? The answer is... not likely.

Below is a partial list of the many pitfalls that forklift buyers can be exposed to if they aren't up to speed on all of the factors that negatively affect forklift capacity.

Most forklifts (not all) are rated based on handling a 48" long (ie. 24" load center) by 48" high by 48" wide load placed tight up against the vertical back of the forklift fork. If the load is longer, wider or higher than these dimensions, the base gross chassis capacity rating of the forklift may be reduced significantly.

Most forklifts are rated without attachments installed, ie sideloaders, fork positioners etc. If an attachment is added, the base gross chassis capacity rating may also be reduced.

Do you need to lift high? Generally, the higher you lift, the lower your chassis capacity rating will be. All forklift manufacturers engineer their trucks differently so you may find that some retain high chassis capacity ratings at high lifting heights while others lose a significant amount of capacity under the same conditions.

Are you replacing a 1967 forklift with a brand new lift truck that has exactly the same specifications? Be prepared for a rude awakening. New trucks today likely don't have the same ability to lift as their older counterparts.

Other miscellaneous items such as tire choice (air pneumatic, solid pneumatic, cushion, dual drive vs single drive), flat ground vs uneven terrain vs ramps, extended forward or backward tilt as well as many other factors can all contribute to eroding the gross chassis

capacity of a forklift truck.

What is the lesson to be learned here?

First, make sure you know the exact weights and sizes of the loads you need to handle and the exact lifting heights of where these loads need to be placed in your storage facility. Weigh them if you don't know, don't guess.

Second, before committing to buy, lease or rent any forklift, make sure you always confirm the net capacity rating when the forks are at their maximum lifting height and at a load center that equates to the types of loads you will be handling at your facility.

Third, and most importantly, make sure you are dealing with an experienced forklift fleet management expert that not only understands the equipment and related specifications being offered to you, but who also understands your application as well as the big picture on how to integrate the forklift truck for maximum safety, productivity and cost efficiency.

Choosing the right forklift is not as easy as buying a car... and we all know how frustrating and complicated buying a car can be. Make sure you are in good hands... and do your homework... someone's life may depend on it.

Scott McLeod, President of Fleetman Consulting Inc., is a forklift fleet management specialist. His company is not affiliated with a forklift dealer or lift truck manufacturer, therefore his advice is unbiased and targeted toward the end user. Need help with your forklift fleet? Contact Scott at 604-614-3530 or at smcleod@fleetmanconsulting.com. Check out their extensive list of client testimonials at www.fleetmanconsulting.com. ♦



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