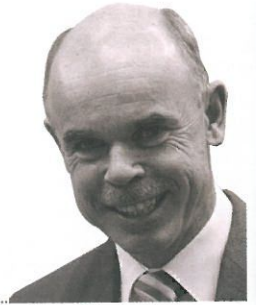


Standard of living



IT HAS BEEN A LONG AND TORTUOUS ROAD BUT 'INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS – SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND VERIFICATION – PART 1', BETTER KNOWN BY MOST AS EN ISO 3691-1, HAS FINALLY BEEN ADOPTED IN EUROPE. BITA'S TECHNICAL CONSULTANT **BOB HINE** TAKES UP THE STORY.

■ I know this sounds incredibly dry and bureaucratic, but the lives of fork lift trucks users can potentially depend on such matters ■



After nine years in development and many twists and turns, EN ISO 3691 was

published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) on 15th January 2016. This covers safety requirements and standards which will now apply under the Machinery Directive to the manufacture of all kinds of fork lift trucks including counterbalance trucks, reach trucks and pallet-stacking trucks – not just in the EU but internationally.

It is the Machinery Directive which designers and manufacturers of trucks are required to comply with relating to safety, and all the essential health and safety requirements, or EHSRs are specified, but until now there has been no Harmonised Standard ensuring Presumption of Conformity.

Now I know this sounds incredibly dry and bureaucratic, but the lives of fork lift trucks users can potentially depend on such matters. The adoption of the Harmonised Standard through EN ISO 3691 will make things more straightforward, saving a lot of work around interpretation of the Machinery Directive, so it will be key to the work of designers and manufacturers, as well as being extremely useful to all those who take responsibility for the safety of industrial trucks.

DANISH OBJECTION

This much needed standard was first approved and issued for consultation by European standards body CEN in 2012, and many of us thought this would then pass quite smoothly on

to formal publication in the OJEU and ultimately adoption. However an objection by Denmark around clauses on modifications to trucks, and whether these were likely to compromise truck safety and impinge on competition, stopped things in their tracks. Like all member states involved in this process, including the UK, they had every chance to comment during the drafting process – but for reasons best known to themselves only objected when issued.

This led to a three-and-a-half-year delay as the clauses were renegotiated, with publication in the OJEU finally achieved in January, which was a great moment for those of us in BITA, and other industry bodies, who had been so closely involved with the process.

So what does the new standard cover? In short:

- The product needs to be designed so it is fit for purpose and can be adjusted and maintained without putting persons at risk;
- The manufacture will have identified hazards that apply to a product, undertake a risk assessment, and then take this into account in design and construction.

The aim here is to eliminate the risk of accidents during the foreseeable lifetime of the machinery. The manufacturer also needs to apply the following principles:

- Eliminate or reduce risks as far as possible by design;

- Take the necessary protective measures in relation to risks that cannot be eliminated by design;
- Inform users of any shortcomings of the protective measures adopted;
- Indicate where particular training is required;
- Specify any need to provide personal protective equipment;
- Refer to the appropriate user's document for proper operating instructions.

So, quite a list of requirements – but we have all read the horror stories around deaths and injuries of those operating fork lift trucks, and if any of these can be prevented by ensuring good safe design that has got to be worth it.

BITA has played an active role in helping to develop these new standards – and has a proud history of supporting efforts to 'design out' risk as much as possible, as evidenced by our Design4Safety awards, which take place again this year at IMHX in September at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre.

A long and bureaucratic process it may have been – but only by going through such a process and creating these standards can we help keep forklift users safe. At the same time, this will also encourage free trade by having internationally recognised standards allowing manufacturers' products to be sold worldwide without any technical barriers. ■

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- 'INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS – SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND VERIFICATION – PART 1', PUBLISHED IN THE OJEU IN JANUARY 2016
- COVERS DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE OF FORK LIFT TRUCKS INCLUDING COUNTERBALANCE, REACH AND PALLET STACKING TRUCKS
- THE NEW STANDARD IS INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED, AS WELL AS RECOGNISED IN THE EU
- THIS WILL HELP KEEP FORK LIFT TRUCK OPERATORS SAFE, AS WELL AS FACILITATING SALES OF TRUCKS WORLDWIDE WITHOUT TECHNICAL BARRIERS



Lifting Industry Standards