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The importance of driver training

James Clark, Secretary-General of the British Industrial Truck Association (BITA), addresses the importance of driver training.

Forklifts are the warehouse workhorses but like all powerful tools they can be dangerous if not used carefully. Incidents involving pedestrians struck by vehicles are the most common type of major workplace accident and forklifts are involved in one in four workplace transport accidents. Many of these are preventable - which is why driver training and refresher training is so vital.

Operation and training: the rules

No one can operate a forklift truck below the age of 16, but in ports this rises to 18. Regarding physical requirements, each person's fitness for operating a lift truck should be judged individually, with an emphasis on matching the requirements of a task with the fitness and abilities of the driver.

Under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 employers are required to 'ensure that all persons who use work equipment have received adequate training for purposes of health and safety, including training in the methods which may be adopted when using the work equipment, any risks which such use may entail and precautions to be taken'.

At BITA we believe that materials handling stakeholders have a vital role to play in training and safety and we have developed publications to help. These include our safety best-practice booklets for operators, as well as best practice and legislation guidance notes for employers and managers.

BITA
www.bita.org.uk