



GOALS

This safety session will teach trainees:

- That even these simple pieces of equipment can cause serious injuries
- Rules for safe pallet jack maintenance
- How to use pallet jacks safely

Applicable Regulations: 29 CFR 1910.176



1. Pallet jacks may not seem like dangerous pieces of equipment, but they can cause painful injuries.

- Workers should wear safety-toed footwear to prevent injuries like having a foot run over, stubbing a toe, or being hit by items falling from a load.
- They should wear gloves to reduce the risk of cuts, bruises, and blisters.
- Workers should also wear eye protection to prevent injury from material strapping or from hazardous chemicals being moved.

2. Proper maintenance is also important for safety's sake.

- Solid rubber wheels should be replaced promptly when they are worn because they can cause unstable loads and create extra strain on workers using the equipment.
- Damaged or defective pallets can also cause a load to shift and fall. Keep them in good shape as well, and inspect them before use.
- Floors should be kept in good condition because ruts and uneven surfaces can make control and safe operation of pallet jacks more difficult.

3. Always check the owner's manual because different hand models may have slightly different rules for safe operation—but in general:

- Know the maximum load capacity.
- Put the forks completely under the pallet.
- To raise the forks, push the actuating lever down and pump the handle.
- A clearance of 1 inch between the floor and the pallet is usually sufficient to move the load—and the load is more stable if it is kept close to the floor.
- Put the actuating level in a neutral position to move the load—the forks will remain in the raised position.
- Make sure your foot is safely out of the way before you lower the load.
- Pull the actuating level up to release the load.
- Start and stop gradually to prevent the load from shifting position.

4. Rules for safe operation include the following:

- Never operate a pallet jack unless you have been trained to do so.
- Never exceed the manufacturer's maximum load-rated capacity; the capacity will be clearly marked on the pallet jack.
- Center the forks evenly under the load to maintain good balance and ensure stability of the load.



- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends that you push (don't pull) manual pallet jacks.
- Stop moving your load if someone is in your way—don't assume the person sees you and can avoid you.
- Use established traffic lanes and exercise caution to avoid collisions at corners.
- Ask a spotter to assist you if your view is obstructed by the load.
- Park the pallet jack in a level place with the forks lowered when you are finished using it.
- Make sure the handle is up and the jack is out of a traffic area so no one will trip over it.
- Don't block exits or emergency equipment, like fire extinguishers.

5. Pallet jacks are meant to help you handle heavy loads safely.

- Think how easily you and your coworkers could injure yourselves if you tried to move the same materials without the assistance of a pallet jack.
- If you don't use the equipment safely, you can still be injured.
- Don't speed, and be extra cautious on ramps.
- Never carry riders or ride the equipment yourself—horseplay can cause accidents!



DISCUSSION:

Talk with your trainees about how pallet jacks (and larger material-handling equipment like pallet trucks and forklifts) are used in your workplace. Are there clear guidelines in place regarding proper traffic lanes and speed restrictions?



CONCLUSION:

Pallet jacks are meant to help—not hurt—you. Obey the safety rules and that's what they'll do.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

Have your employees take the Pallet Jack Safety quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can judge whether they recognize the hazards of using this equipment or if you need to review this important topic again soon.



PALLET JACK SAFETY QUIZ

- Pallet jacks may not seem like dangerous pieces of equipment, but they can cause painful injuries.**
a. True. b. False.
- You don't need personal protective equipment when using a pallet jack.**
a. True. b. False.
- Worn wheels can cause unstable loads and create extra strain on workers using the equipment.**
a. True. b. False.
- To raise the forks, push the actuating lever down and pump the handle.**
a. True. b. False.
- Put the actuating level in a neutral position to move the load—the forks will remain raised.**
a. True. b. False.
- A clearance of 3 inches between the floor and the pallet is usually required to move the load.**
a. True. b. False.
- Pallet jacks are very easy to use—anyone is allowed to do it.**
a. True. b. False.
- Exceeding the maximum capacity posted on the pallet jack is allowed if you are only moving the load for a short distance.**
a. True. b. False.
- Push (don't pull) manual pallet jacks.**
a. True. b. False.
- Park the pallet jack out of a traffic area so no one will trip over it, and don't block emergency exits or equipment like fire extinguishers.**
a. True. b. False.

When you have completed this quiz, turn it in to your supervisor.

Name: _____

Date: _____



ANSWERS TO PALLET JACK SAFETY QUIZ

1. a. True.
2. b. False. You should wear safety-toe footwear, gloves, and eye protection when using a pallet jack.
3. a. True.
4. a. True.
5. a. True.
6. b. False. A clearance of 1 inch between the floor and the pallet is usually sufficient to move the load—and it's more stable than if the load is higher.
7. b. False. Never operate a pallet jack unless you have been trained to do so.
8. b. False. Never exceed the manufacturer's load-rated capacity.
9. a. True.
10. a. True.