

Forklift operator job description

Updated October 17, 2026. Written and reviewed by the HRTally Research Team. Replace everything in [brackets].

Details

- Department: [Department]
- Reports to: [Manager title]
- Location: [City, State, or remote]
- Employment type: [Full-time, part-time, or seasonal]
- FLSA status: Nonexempt
- Pay range: [\$X to \$Y per hour]

About [Company]

[Two or three sentences about what your company does, who it serves, and why people like working here.]

Job summary

We're hiring a forklift operator to move and store materials safely and efficiently in our [warehouse, yard, or plant].

What you'll do

- Operate [sit-down, stand-up, reach, or order picker] forklifts safely.
- Load and unload trucks, trailers, and containers.
- Move materials to and from storage, production, and shipping areas.
- Complete pre-shift equipment inspections and report defects.
- Stack and store loads safely within rated capacity.
- Scan and record inventory movements.
- Keep aisles and docks clear and organized.
- Follow traffic rules and pedestrian safety procedures.

What you'll need

- At least 18 years old.
- Forklift experience on [equipment type].
- Ability to pass an OSHA-compliant operator evaluation.
- Good depth perception and attention to safety.

Nice to have

- Current forklift certification from a previous employer.
- Experience with a warehouse management system.
- Experience with [specific equipment, such as clamp or turret trucks].

Skills

Safe equipment operation, Load handling, Spatial awareness, Inspection, Attention to detail, Teamwork.

Physical demands and work environment

Warehouse, dock, or yard, possibly outdoors or in cold storage. Involves sitting or standing on equipment, climbing on and off, and occasional lifting.

Pay and benefits

[\$X to \$Y per hour], based on experience and location. [List benefits, such as health insurance, retirement plan match, paid time off, and training.]

Equal opportunity

[Company] is an equal opportunity employer. We consider all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other status protected by law. If you need a reasonable accommodation to apply or interview, contact [name] at [email or phone].

Hiring notes for HR and the hiring manager

Pay data

- Median hourly wage: \$22.32 (BLS OEWS, May 2025, SOC 53-7051, Industrial truck and tractor operators).
- Median annual equivalent: \$46,430 (hourly median x 2,080 hours).
- Mean annual wage: \$48,370.
- Check state and metro data at bls.gov/oes before setting your range, and include the range in postings where the law requires it.

Exempt status and legal notes

FLSA status: Nonexempt (overtime eligible). Duties and pay decide overtime eligibility, not the job title.

OSHA's powered industrial truck standard, 29 CFR 1910.178(l), requires employers to train and evaluate every operator on the specific trucks and conditions in their workplace before they operate, and to evaluate performance at least every three years. A certificate from another employer doesn't transfer automatically. Federal child labor rules (Hazardous Occupations Order No. 7) prohibit workers under 18 from operating forklifts.

How to customize it

- Name the forklift types used.
- Say whether you train and certify in-house.
- List shift, pay, and any certification premium.
- Describe the environment, such as cold storage or outdoors.

Interview questions

1. Walk me through your pre-shift inspection.
2. What would you do if a load looked unstable?
3. Which forklift types have you operated, and in what settings?
4. Tell me about a near miss you saw and what you did.

Before you post

- Separate required from preferred. Required means you won't hire without it. Everything else is preferred. Long required lists screen out qualified people.
- Describe physical demands and environment. Lifting, standing, shifts, travel, noise, temperature. This sets honest expectations and supports an ADA essential functions record.

- State the pay range. Required in a growing list of states and cities, and expected by candidates everywhere else.
- Say exempt or nonexempt. Decide based on duties and salary before you post, and keep the classification consistent with how you pay.
- Name required licenses and checks. Licenses, certifications, background checks, drug tests, and driving record reviews, with the timing of each.
- Add the accommodation and EEO statement. Tell candidates how to request a reasonable accommodation, and include your equal opportunity statement.

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