

Safe Use of Tail Lifts



Fig1

Operating a tail lift may seem simple, but tail lifts hold many hidden dangers that could cause operators a lot more problems than just damaged merchandise. These problems could vary from a minor injury to a fatality.

Legal Requirements

Occupational Health and Safety regulations oblige an employer to ensure that the minimum requirements for the safe use of work equipment by workers at the place of work are strictly adhered to. The employer is obliged to carry out a risk assessment of all work activities undertaken by the employees and to ensure that the ensuing control measures are implemented. Moreover the provisions of Legal Notice 293 of 2016, the Work Equipment (Minimum Safety and Health Requirements) Regulations, require an employer to ensure that:

- the tail lift made available to the workers is suitable for the work to be carried out;
- particular attention is given to the specific working conditions and characteristics and to the hazards which exist in the undertaking and, or establishment, in particular at the workplace, for the health and safety of the workers, and, or any additional hazards posed by the use of the tail lift;
- the tail lift is, throughout its working life, kept adequately maintained at all times by competent persons;
- it is subject to periodic inspections and should be tested by competent persons, since the tail lift is exposed to conditions causing deterioration which is liable to result in dangerous situations;
- if the tail lift is used for lifting only loads it shall be inspected every 12 months, if it is used to lift persons as well it shall be inspected every 6 months by a competent person;
- a special inspection is carried out by a competent person following modification works;
- records of inspection reports are kept for a period of two years;
- the use of such work equipment is restricted to those persons given the task of using it, since the use of the tail lift is likely to involve a specific risk;
- workers are given written instructions on how to operate the tail lift, together with the conditions of use;
- workers are adequately trained in the use of the tail lift and all available data and operating manuals should be made available to the workers at all time; workers are made aware of all the dangers related with the misuse and, or consequences due to tampering with any safety device or interlock on the tail gate.



What records should one keep?

- Maintenance work and any repairs.
- Inspection reports including the safe working load test.
- A record of the past two years' examinations.
- Records of employee training.
- The risk assessments and any other documentation including your Safe System of Work.

Workers shall not tamper with safety devices, shall not misuse the equipment and are to adhere to all safety instructions so as not to endanger their own health and safety and that of others.



Fig2

The DO's and DON'Ts when using tail lifts

- The tail lift must be inspected prior to use, as part of the vehicle pre use check.
- During an operation, check for any mechanical or electrical defects.
- If the tail lift is not moving smoothly and crunching, squealing or grinding sounds are heard, stop use and have it checked out by a competent person.
- Ensure that no person, animal or any object is in the path of the tail lift.
- If working in a team ensure that no one's foot will get pinched while lowering or lifting tail lift platform.
- If the tail lift is equipped with kick plates, side plates, roll stop or other load securing device, these should be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure that no one attempts to over ride any safety device.
- Always place the load in the centre of the tail lift platform.
- Don't place too many items on the tail lift as this will not only make them unstable, but will also leave less space for the operator to stand safely.
- Don't exceed the safe working load (SWL).
- Don't drive vehicle if tail lift is in operation.
- Always ensure the tail lift platform and rear door are secure prior to driving.
- Take into account weather conditions, rain may render the platform slippery, whereas hot conditions may render hands slippery and handles less easy to hold.

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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document is correct and provided in good faith according to current best practice - it is also strongly recommended that one should consider all relevant regulations related to this subject.

Image sources

Fig1. http://m.carryboycargobox.com/TailLift/images/cargobox_tail_lift_tlc500_2.png

Fig2. <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/XRmbBnjU-Jo/maxresdefault.jpg>

