

WAC 296-155-53416 Forklifts when lifting a suspended load. (1) Effective January 1, 2027, forklift operators must be certified or qualified depending on the configuration and usage utilized to lift a suspended load.

(2) All machine and attachment manufacturer prohibitions/restrictions must be complied with.

(3) Operators must be evaluated in accordance with WAC 296-155-53300(3) (Operator qualifications and certification).

(4) Depending on the configuration and usage of the forklift, operators must be certified or qualified in the following manner:

(a) When the forklift is configured and used to lift or lower a suspended load, by means of a hook/shackle, WAC 296-155-53300 (Operator qualifications and certification) is applicable; or

(b) When the forklift is configured and used to lift or lower a suspended load by any other manner, the operator must be certified in accordance with (a) of this subsection, or be qualified, per the requirements contained in subsection (5) of this section.

(5) Qualified operator requirements. The operator must be qualified prior to using a forklift to lift a suspended load. This requirement must be met by using either Option (1) or Option (2) in (a) of this subsection:

(a)(i) **Option (1) - Third-party qualified evaluator.** The operator has documentation from a third-party qualified evaluator showing that the operator is qualified in accordance with the requirements listed in (b) of this subsection.

(ii) **Option (2) - Employer's qualified evaluator.** The employer's qualified evaluator must assess the operator and determine that the operator is qualified in accordance with the requirements listed in (b) of this subsection, and provides documentation of that determination. An assessment by an employer's qualified evaluator under this option is not portable, meaning other employers are not permitted to use this qualification to meet the requirements of this section.

(b) The operator must first pass a written and a practical test. The employer must make the documentation for whichever option is used available at the site while the operator is employed by the employer. The documentation may be in digital format.

(i) Written tests. Tests may be administered written or verbally, with answers given written or verbally. Tests may be administered in any language the operator candidate understands. The operator is only permitted to operate equipment that is furnished with operations manuals and load charts that are written in the language that the operator understands. Tests must include questions based on the following:

(A) Questions that determine the operator knows the information necessary for the safe operation of the specific equipment and attachments the operator will operate;

(B) The forklift controls and operational/performance characteristics and limitations;

(C) The use of, and the ability to, calculate (manually or with a calculator) load/capacity information on a variety of configurations of the forklift;

(D) Reading and understanding load chart information, including limitations and footnotes, calculating deductions, how to relate the configuration of the forklift to the load chart, what is included in the capacity ratings, and the range diagrams and their relationship to the load chart;

(E) The procedures for preventing power line contact;

(F) The effects of dynamic loading from side loading, wind, starting and stopping, moving the load, and the principles of backward stability;

(G) How to identify the suitability of the ground/surface to support the expected load. This includes potential weaknesses below the surface (such as voids, tanks, and loose soil), along with potential weaknesses on the surface such as retaining walls, slopes, excavations, and depressions;

(H) How to pick and carry loads smoothly and safely;

(I) How to properly level the forklift;

(J) How to inspect the forklift and attachments;

(K) Emergency response procedure for fires, power line contact, loss of stability, control malfunction, and overloading;

(L) How to properly use outriggers and stabilizers in accordance with manufacturer's specifications; and

(M) Operator duties found in WAC 296-155-53401(7).

(ii) Practical tests must include and assess the following skills:

(A) Inspecting the forklift and attachments;

(B) Lifting, lowering, and traveling with the load;

(C) Following hand signals; and

(D) A combination of multifunction operations.

(c) Qualifications are valid for a maximum of three years.

(d) Operators must pass the practical test, at a minimum, in order to be requalified.

(6) The department will review and evaluate the qualified operator option for operators using forklifts to lift suspended loads outlined in subsection (5) of this section within two years after January 1, 2027.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, 49.17.060, and chapter 49.17 RCW. WSR 25-16-089, s 296-155-53416, filed 8/5/25, effective 9/5/25.]