



1. Purpose: The Powered Industrial Truck Program is designed to protect Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) employees who operate or maintain powered industrial trucks (PIT). This program was developed to ensure compliance with OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.178. This standard states, in part, only trained and authorized operators are permitted to operate a PIT.
2. Scope / Applicability: This Program applies to all Virginia Commonwealth University employees that operate and/or maintain specialized industrial trucks powered by electric motors or internal combustion engines. This includes fork lift or material delivery vehicles that are self-propelled, that the operator walks with, stands on, or sits on.
 - a. Out of Scope: This program does not apply to:
 - 1) Compressed air or nonflammable compressed gas-operated industrial trucks;
 - 2) Farm vehicles; nor
 - 3) Vehicles intended primarily for earth moving or over-the-road hauling.
3. Responsibilities
 - a. Safety and Risk Management (SRM) is responsible for:
 - i. Reviewing the PIT program to assure compliance;
 - ii. Coordinating and/or providing training to affected employees; and
 - iii. Maintaining training records for all operators.
 - b. Departments/Supervisors are responsible for:
 - i. Ensuring employees attend training, operate PITs in a safe manne
 - ii. r and are competent to operate a PIT safely;
 - iii. Requesting and scheduling training with SRM for their employees;
 - iv. Ensuring all equipment is in proper working condition;
 - v. Assuring operators perform appropriate pre-operation safety inspections and complete checklist prior to operating equipment;
 - vi. Inspecting emergency eyewash stations and documenting on a weekly basis;
 - vii. Scheduling maintenance by outside contractors;
 - viii. Conducting assessments of their works areas in which PITs are used to determine if specialty designed equipment may be required (see OSHA standard [29 CFR 1910.178\(c\)](#) for reference). If designated locations exist, notify SRM for assistance in determining which type of industrial truck to use;



- ix. Reviewing forklift inspection checklists on a monthly basis; and
- x. Maintaining required documentation.
- c. Employees are responsible for:
 - i. Complying with this Program and all applicable federal and state regulations regarding powered industrial trucks;
 - ii. Completing the required training prior to operating a PIT;
 - iii. Conducting an inspection using the [checklist](#) prior to operating a PIT;
 - iv. Maintaining and providing proper authorized operator documentation in either certification form or wallet card; and
 - v. Reporting unsafe conditions or incident to their supervisor and taking PIT out of service if needed.

4. General Requirements

- a. Only trained and authorized operators shall be permitted to operate at PIT.
- b. The manufacturer's written approval is required to make any modifications or additions that may affect the capacity or the safe operation of a PIT. Capacity, operation, and maintenance instruction plates, tags, or decals shall be changed accordingly.
- c. If the PIT is equipped with front-end attachments other than factory installed attachments, the PIT shall be marked to identify the attachments and show the approximate weight of the truck and attachment combination at maximum elevation with load laterally centered.
- d. Nameplates and markings shall be in place and maintained in a legible condition.
- e. If at any time a PIT is found to be in need of repair, defective, or in any way unsafe, the truck shall be removed from service and repaired to the manufacturer's specifications. No PIT will be put back into service until all repairs have been made.

5. Safety Inspections: Prior to operating a PIT, the employee shall perform a pre-operation safety inspection using the inspection checklist as follows:

- a. The inspection shall be conducted and documented at least daily when the PIT is used;
- b. When a PIT is used on a round-the-clock basis, it shall be inspected and documented before each shift;
- c. The inspection shall identify any conditions that could affect the safe operation of the PIT;
- d. If any unsafe condition(s) exist, the PIT shall be taken out of service and tagged "Out of Service" until it is restored to safe operating conditions;



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- e. If a PIT fails inspection, the operator shall immediately notify the supervisor so they can notify the person responsible for the repairs; and
- f. Only outside contractors qualified to repair PITs shall perform all repairs and adjustments.

6. Fuel Handling and Storage: The storage and handling of liquid fuels such as gasoline and diesel fuel shall be in accordance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code (NFPA 30). The storage and handling of liquefied petroleum gas fuel shall be in accordance with NFPA Storage and Handling of Liquefied Petroleum Gases (NFPA 58). The following procedures shall be followed:

- a. Battery charging installations shall be located in areas designated for that purpose;
- b. Facilities shall be provided for flushing and neutralizing spilled electrolyte, for fire protection, for protecting charging apparatus from damage by trucks and for adequate ventilation for dispersal of fumes from gassing batteries and fuels;
- c. When refueling or recharging the batteries of a PIT, the operator shall ensure that the PIT is shut-off and the parking brake is engaged;
- d. For battery changing areas, an emergency eyewash/shower unit shall be present in the area;
- e. Personal protective equipment shall be worn during refueling and battery filling/charging operations, propane tank change-outs and any other potentially hazardous operation. PPE shall include approved face shield, goggles and gloves;
- f. Smoking shall be prohibited in refueling and recharging areas. Fuel vapors and gases are extremely flammable;
- g. Check the level in the battery monthly;
- h. When charging batteries, acid shall be poured into water; water shall not be poured into acid; and
- i. Precautions shall be taken to prevent open flames, sparks, or electric arcs in battery changing areas.

7. Operating a PIT

- a. Always travel with the forks approximately four inches from the ground so they clear any uneven surfaces or as low as possible.
- b. Always survey the area ahead and to the sides while traveling. Be prepared to handle hazardous conditions including:
 - a. Overhead obstructions;
 - b. Co-workers or pedestrians;
 - c. Poor housekeeping;
 - d. Poor visibility around corners;



- e. Poor floor condition; and
- f. Poor visibility around corners
- c. Always travel in reverse or use a "spotter" when the load being carried obstructs the view.
- d. The applicable department is responsible for providing guards for their machinery, and taking the equipment out of service until the appropriate guards are in place.

8. Safety Practices: The following safety practices shall be adhered to at all times:

- a. Always wear the seatbelt whenever the truck is equipped with one;
- b. Keep all body parts inside the driver's compartment;
- c. Drive at appropriate speeds;
- d. No person is permitted to stand or pass under the elevated portion of any truck, whether loaded or empty;
- e. Maintain a safe distance of at least three truck lengths from the truck ahead while traveling and maintain control of the truck at all times;
- f. Approach ramps and inclines straight, not at an angle and never turn the PIT while on a ramp or an incline;
- g. A PIT is considered unattended when the operator is 25 ft. or more away from the vehicle which remains in his view, or whenever the operator leaves the vehicle and it is not in his view;
 - a. If a PIT is unattended, load engaging means shall be fully lowered, controls shall be neutralized, and power shall be shut off, and breaks set;
 - b. If the operator is dismounted and within 25 ft. of the truck still in his view, the load engaging means shall be fully lowered, controls neutralized, and the breaks set to prevent movement; and
- h. Never park a PIT in front of any fire protection equipment, emergency exits, or in a manner that would obstruct a person from exiting the area.

9. Training and recordkeeping

- Initial Training – VCU employees are required to participate in and successfully complete a PIT training program in order to ensure the operator is competent to operate a PIT safely. The program must be provided by or approved by VCU Safety and Risk Management. Prior to permitting an employee to operate a PIT, the supervisor shall ensure that each operator has successfully completed PIT required training or has a valid Operator Identification Card.



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- Training will consist of a combination of formal instruction, practical training, and an evaluation. Formal instruction must include lecture, interactive discussion, video and written material handouts. Practical training includes demonstrations performed by the trainer. Evaluation consist of reviewing the operator performing practical exercises in the workplace.
- Curriculum – The training program shall address, at a minimum, the following:
 - Safety inspection;
 - Workplace hazards;
 - Safe driving and operating procedures;
 - Loading-carrying-unloading of materials; and
 - Operation and safety driving practical.
- Refresher Training – Employees are required to participate in refresher training at least once every three years
- All operator training and evaluation shall be conducted by persons who have the knowledge, training, and experience to train PIT operators and evaluate their competence.
- Trainees may operate a PIT only:
 - Under the supervision of persons who have the knowledge, training, and experience to train operators and evaluate their competence; and
 - Where such operation does not endanger the trainee or other employees.
- Retraining – Retraining may be necessary when it has been documented that the operator has been observed operating a PIT in an unsafe and/or inappropriate manner, involved in an accident or near miss, or a condition in the workplace changes in a manner that could affect safe operation of the PIT. If an employee has been involved in any of the examples described above, use of any PIT by the employee may be restricted until retraining has been completed.
- Recordkeeping
 - Training records will be maintained by SRM.
 - Authorized operators are responsible for maintaining operator ID card.
 - Maintenance, repair records, and inspections must be documented and kept by the department with or near the PIT.

10. References

29 CFR 1910.178 – Powered Industrial Trucks