

FORKLIFT OPERATOR and INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

This information sheet is a brief introduction to the *Approved Code of Practice for Training Operators and Instructors of Powered Industrial Lift Trucks (Forklifts)*. It outlines the development of the code, its relationship with the Health and Safety in Employment Act, and its main provisions.

Development of the Code

In 1975, following industry concern at accidents involving forklifts and the damage caused to forklifts and materials, the then-Minister of Labour set up the Forklift Safety Advisory Committee to tackle the problem. The committee developed a code of practice for the training of forklift operators which was approved under the Machinery Act by the Minister of Labour in 1987.

In 1992-93, the Department of Labour's Occupational Safety and Health Service (OSH), at the request of industry parties, set up a working party to review and update the 1987 code.

On 9 May 1995, the Minister of Labour approved the new code

under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.

Relationship between the Code and the Health and Safety in Employment Act

Section 13 of the HSE Act requires employers to ensure employees are adequately trained in the safe use of plant (machinery).

Section 12 of the Act places duties on employers to provide safety information to employees.

The code provides employers with one means of meeting their obligations under the Act. In deciding whether employers have fulfilled their obligations under the Act, the Courts may have regard to a code of practice approved under the Act.

What the Code Provides

The code provides a minimum standard for the training of operators of front loading forklifts but is also suitable for training operators of:

- Order pickers;
- Side loaders;

- Reach trucks;
- Pallet trucks;
- Platform trucks;
- Straddle trucks and carriers;
- Lateral stacking trucks.

It also sets out the criteria to be met by instructors conducting the training.

Importantly, the code provides:

- A standard syllabus including written and practical tests;
- For trainers to issue operators who have attended and passed the course with a certificate in recognition of this;
- For standards to be met by instructors;
- For instructors to be registered by the Occupational Safety and Health Service and vetted every three years to ensure they are maintaining standards.

Code Sets a Standard for Basic Training

The code sets a minimum standard for basic training and employers must ensure that operators receive "additional"

training in the operations that are particular to the employer's industry or set-up. For example, additional training must be provided in the use of any special attachments used.

Who should use the Code?

The code should be used by "in-house" forklift instructors and also "public" instructors. It may be used as a basis for any training programme for forklift operators.

Why Vet and Register Instructors?

Many employers don't have the resources to set up their own in-house training programmes and can have confidence in using public instructors who have been vetted and registered by the Occupational Safety and Health Service.

In having their in-house instructors vetted and registered, employers are demonstrating their commitment to safety and compliance with the Act.

Register of Instructors to be Published

The Occupational Safety and Health Service publishes a register of forklift instructors periodically, for the information of industry.

Relationship of the Code with the NZ Qualifications Authority (NZQA)

At the time of printing this pamphlet, an industry working party is developing training units for forklift operators for NZQA. These training units are to be based mainly on the *Approved Code of Practice for Training Operators and*

Instructors of Powered Industrial Lift Trucks (Forklifts) and the industry parties involved are essentially the same as those that developed the code.

In future, instructors accredited and vetted by NZQA to apply their training units will be acceptable to the Occupational Safety and Health Service.

Further Information

For a copy of the code or further information, contact your nearest office of the Occupational Safety and Health Service.