

## FACT SHEET 01

# WHAT IS THE MINIMUM AGE FOR OPERATING FORK LIFT TRUCKS?

The HSC Approved Code of Practice and Guidance, detailed below, clearly states that

*“Children under minimum school leaving age should **never** operate lift trucks.”*

It also states that operators of fork lift trucks on docks premises must be at least 18.

These are the only clear age related statements in official documents. However, guidance goes on to say that young persons, under 18, often lack experience and maturity and are at greater risk than older employees and should not be allowed to operate fork lift trucks without adequate supervision.

Many trainers will not accept trainee operators under the age of 17.

The minimum ages specified in road traffic legislation apply when fork lift trucks are operated on public roads. Currently this would be age 17 for trucks up to 3.5 tonnes gvw, 18 up to 7.5 tonnes gvw, and 21 for heavier equipment.

(gww = gross vehicle weight = the weight of the fork lift truck and the load)

Further information is available in the following publications which are readily available from HSE Books (Telephone 01787 881165).

Rider-Operated Lift Trucks: Operator Training  
Approved Code of Practice and Guidance  
HSC Code L117  
ISBN: 0-7176-2455-2  
Price £5.00

Young People At Work  
A Guide For Employers  
HSE Code HSG165  
ISBN: 0-7176-1889-7  
Price £7.95

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The information in this Fact Sheet has been assembled and interpreted to give truck owners and users basic guidance on frequently asked questions. Further important information will be given in the quoted reference documents. Responsibility for meeting the safety obligations discussed rests with the employer, and the FLTA will not accept liability for any problem arising as a result of the content of this document. **Technical Bulletins, containing more detailed information and updated as appropriate, are made available free to members of the FLTA SAFE USER GROUP.**

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