



Electric pallet jacks make quick work of moving loads around the workplace. Pallet jacks protect your back from strains and injuries by moving heavy and awkward loads and objects that would be unsafe to lift manually.

But, as with any powered tool, electric pallet jacks can become a safety liability if misused.

If you operate an electric pallet jack on the job, get training in using the equipment from an experienced worker.

Your training should include practical, hands-on application exercises to ensure that you can safely operate the specific equipment at your worksite. Only operate the pallet jack if you have been authorized to do so by your employer.

Be familiar with the electric pallet jack you will use on the job.

Review the manufacturer's operating instructions and details on the jack's capacity. A lift rating capacity plate should be mounted on the jack; never exceed the manufacturer load-rated capacity. Know how to use the power controls and brakes properly. Use the forks and attachments correctly. Always inspect the equipment before each use; never operate an electric pallet jack if it malfunctions.

When charging the jack, use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet and ensure you use precautions to avoid electric shock.

Learn and follow the general safety rules for electric pallet jack use. Load the jack securely to prevent materials from shifting during movement. Gradually start and stop the jack to prevent the load from slipping.

Use extreme caution when pulling the jack; ensure that your pathway is clear and that you will not trip backward or run into obstacles. Keep your body and your coworkers clear of the pallet jack to avoid being crushed by the machine. Never ride on a pallet jack and avoid horseplay when you are using one.

Watch for coworkers and obstacles at all times when you are using an electric pallet jack.

Give people the right of way instead of expecting them to get out of your way. Slow down and proceed cautiously when you are at a crosswalk or obscured thoroughway in the workplace. Try to stack and move loads in a manner that will not block your line of vision.

Always use a spotter to assist you if you cannot see around the load.

Use extra caution in narrow aisles, slopes and inclines, and other restricted areas where your maneuverability will be limited. If you are authorized to use the jack in an elevator, always enter it with the load first; do not back up into the elevator. Use the same technique when entering any constricted space with a pallet jack. Ensure that trucks and railcars that you are authorized to enter are properly blocked from movement.