



Electric pallet jacks make quick work of moving loads around the workplace. Pallet jacks protect your back from strains and injuries by moving heavy, awkward loads and objects that would be unsafe to lift manually. However, as with any powered tool, electric pallet jacks can become a safety liability if used improperly.

If you operate an electric pallet jack on the job, get trained on how to use 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 that 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 is malfunctioning. When charging the jack, use a 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 you are pulling the jack; ensure that your pathway is clear and that you will not trip backward or run into obstacles. Keep your body and coworkers clear of the pallet jack to avoid being crushed by the machine. Never ride on a pallet jack and avoid horseplay when 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 leave your way. Slow down and proceed cautiously at a crosswalk or obscured thoroughway in the workplace. Try to stack and move loads 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, on 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 you can enter are properly blocked from movement.

Know the basics of electric pallet jack safety and keep up the good work!