

BuyerZone Forklifts Purchasing Guidelines

Buying a forklift for your business?
Here are some important factors to keep in mind.

Forklift weight: Forklifts are rated by how much weight they can lift. Make sure to select a forklift with enough capacity to handle common jobs on your worksite, without spending more for extra capacity you don't need.

Forklift height: Know exactly how high you need to reach before you start shopping.

Physical size: Forklift size is important, particularly for warehouse use. Warehouses with 11' wide aisles or larger can use most standard forklifts. You'll need a narrow aisle forklift for aisles 8' to 10' wide. For extremely narrow 6' wide aisles, a very narrow aisle forklift is best

Two versions of forklifts

- 1. Electric forklifts** – These operate on batteries and are best for indoor use, warehouses and manufacturing plants. While they're more expensive upfront, electric forklifts cost less per hour to operate. They're also quiet and emission-free.
- 2. Internal combustion (IC)** - IC lifts use gas, diesel fuel, or liquid propane gas. They're used outdoors in lumber yards, construction sites, and loading docks. IC forklifts cost less to purchase but have higher hourly operating costs. IC lifts are your only choice for the highest capacities.

What you can expect to pay for forklifts

Forklift weight	Fuel type	Condition	Cost*
3,000 lb	Electric	Used	\$8,000-\$10,000
5,000 lb	IC/Internal Combustion	Used	\$10,000-\$12,000
5,000 lb	Electric	New	\$18,000-\$25,000
5,000 lb	IC	New	\$16,000-\$28,000+
10,000 lb	IC (diesel fuel)	New	\$28,000-\$45,000
35,000 lb	IC	New	\$100,000+

**forklift prices vary widely by brand*



Forklift tire options

Your choice of three tires depends on the type of forklift you buy and where you intend to use it.

1. Solid rubber cushion – best for most electric forklifts operating indoors
2. Pneumatic – use air pressure to provide traction and cushioning on IC forklifts for heavy-duty outdoor use
3. Solid pneumatic – Combines benefits from both to reduce popping risk



Test forklifts on site. Try out all of the controls and get input from employees who will actually operate the equipment

Additional cost considerations

One battery and one charger for an electric forklift - \$2,000-\$5,000

Operating costs (fuel, maintenance, supplies) – can range from \$1/hr for small electric trucks; \$20+/hr for larger IC trucks

Preventative maintenance plans – 10% to 20% of forklift purchase price annually

Classroom training and driver testing – \$75-\$200 per employee

Saving money on a forklift purchase

You can save money by purchasing a reconditioned forklift instead of a new one, but we recommend that you only go this route if you'll use the lift less than 2 or 3 hours per day.

If the up-front costs are too steep, look for forklift dealers that offer leasing and rental options.