

Manual pallet trucks

Construction Occupational Health case study COH06

The problem

Materials are often delivered to site on pallets. In many instances powered lift trucks or telehandlers move the pallets but this is not always possible – there might be limited access, uneven floors (eg beam and block) or low permissible floor loadings.

On one site, 'standard' pump trucks were provided but they were difficult to use because the floors were uneven.

The risks

Pushing and pulling a standard pump truck on uneven floors was difficult and created a significant risk of injury.

Workers decided to transport materials manually which was even riskier.

The solution

The contractor provided an industrial pallet truck with pneumatic tyres. This was more suitable for use on uneven surfaces.



Figure 1 Showing an industrial pallet truck with large pneumatic tyres.

The benefits

- Industrial pallet trucks are relatively cheap to hire and can help workers to distribute materials efficiently.
- Materials can be moved to places that a powered truck is unable to access.
- A wide wheelbase assists manoeuvrability.

Key points

- Tyre pressure needs to be checked regularly. Soft tyres make the pallet truck difficult to push.
- Puncture repair needs to be considered.
- Floors should be relatively smooth and kept clear of sharp items to prevent punctures.
- Pallet trucks cannot be used if there is an internal step. Buildings should be designed to enable trolleys to be used internally during construction.