



United States
Office of Personnel Management

FWS Job Grading Standard for

Fork Lift Operator

5704

TS-3, 11/69

Additional Available Guidance

See [Digest of Significant Classification Decisions & Opinions, Vol. 15](#) for guidance on proper grading of a mixed-series, mixed-grade job.

Workforce Compensation and Performance Service
Classification Programs Division
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WORK COVERED

This standard is to be used for grading nonsupervisory jobs which involve the operation of electric, diesel, or gasoline powered fork lift trucks to move, stack and unstack, and load and unload materials in and about warehouses, storage areas, loading docks, and on and off vehicles, etc. (See [Digest Vol. 15](#) for guidance on proper grading of positions in which work covered by this series is combined with work typical of another series and grade level.)

TITLES

Jobs covered by this standard are to be titled *Fork Lift Operator*.

5704-5**Fork Lift Operator, Grade 5****5704-5**

General: Workers at this grade operate electric, gasoline, or diesel powered fork lift trucks which are capable of lifting loads weighing less than 4,500 kilograms (10,000 pounds) as high as 420 centimeters (168 inches). The fork lift trucks have automatic or manual transmissions with up to four forward speeds and controls to lift and lower loads.

The operators drive fork lift trucks over wood, concrete, or similar type floor's through narrow aisles in buildings and in such confined places as railroad cars and trucks. They occasionally drive outside over rough surfaces.

Skill and Knowledge: The operator must be skilled in handling controls for starting, stopping, backings, and driving fork lift trucks through narrow aisles in building, up and down ramps, and in and out of railroad cars, trucks, planes, etc.; and, for lifting, lowering, and tilting forks by moving hands, arms, feet, and legs to operate controls.

The operator must know how high, wide, and long the fork lift truck and its load are, and how much the fork lift truck can lift. Based on this knowledge, the operator must be able to tell such things as: how high and wide a doorway and an aisle must be to drive the fork lift truck and its load; how high and wide the shelf, bin, etc., must be to place the load; and how high the load must be lifted to reach the shelf or bin. The operator must also be able to tell whether the fork lift truck is able to lift the load and whether the load is properly balanced.

The operator must know the layout of the storage area to be able to find and place items without need for detailed instructions. He must also be skilled in moving fork lift trucks about in places where there is very little room to stack or remove loads.

Responsibility: The operator follows oral instructions or written work orders concerning when and where loads are to be moved and placed.

The operator safely handles materials; sees that the fork lift truck is not used to lift any more of a load than it is able to lift; and places heavy and bulky items at the bottom of stacks to prevent tipping, making sure that the forks are put into the pallets as far as possible to give the most support to the load. He drives carefully to avoid injuring others or damaging equipment and property.

Physical Effort: Moderate physical effort is used in operating hand and foot controls while driving, turning, starting, and stopping the fork lift truck and raising, lowering, and tilting the loads being moved. Strain is caused by the vibration of the fork lift truck.

Working Conditions: The operator normally works inside in areas that are sometimes damp and drafty. He occasionally works outside in all kinds of weather. Cuts, bruises, and broken bones may result from shifting loads, toppling stacks, fork lift truck's overturning, falling objects, or accidents with other moving equipment.

5704-6**Forklift Lift Operator, Grade 6****5704-6**

General: Workers at this grade operate electric, gasoline, or diesel powered fork lift trucks which are capable of lifting loads weighing 4,500 kilograms (10,000 pounds) or more that are higher than 420 centimeters (168 inches).

The operators drive fork lift trucks over rough and sometimes muddy terrain through narrow aisles in outside storage areas. They sometimes drive in inside or outside areas over level surfaces.

Skill and Knowledge: The operator must be more skilled than the grade 5 operator in the handling of controls for driving fork lift trucks and for lifting, lowering, and tilting forks since the fork lifts are able to lift more weight to greater heights. In addition the work is usually performed outside over rough terrain.

Since items in an outside storage area are not usually arranged in neat rows and stacks as they are in a warehouse, the layout is more difficult to learn. Because of the larger size of the fork lift truck and load, moving about in places where there is very little room to stack and remove loads is more difficult.

Responsibility: The operator follows oral instructions or written work orders concerning when and where loads are to be moved and placed.

The responsibility for safe handling of materials is greater than at grade 5. The fork lift trucks are usually operated over rough terrain requiring the operator to exercise greater care to make sure the load does not tip. The responsibility for safe driving is the same as at grade 5.

Physical Effort: More effort than described at [grade 5](#) is required to turn the fork lift truck since it is heavier and is usually driven over rough terrain. The rough terrain causes a greater vibration of the fork lift trucks which requires greater physical endurance to withstand the strain.

Working Conditions: Working conditions are the same as described at [grade 5](#) except that the operator usually works outside in all kinds of weather and is exposed to dust and dirt.