

Forklift Operators Compartment Safety Features

In any forklift truck, the part that has the biggest impact on safety, performance and running costs is also the most expensive. It's the operator.

Over the life of your forklift truck, you'll spend more on operators' wages than anything else – and with good reason. If your operation is going to be safe, efficient and productive, the driver is your most important investment. The first thing any forklift truck should be is a good place to work – but too many managers dismiss a good cab environment as a luxury. And that's a huge mistake. Great cab design is critical. Here's why:



1. Boosting productivity

When your drivers are uncomfortable, it's a big distraction – and they tire more quickly, too. That lack of focus reduces performance, while increasing the risk of accidents. A well thought-out cab puts all the controls within arm's reach, allowing the driver to keep their mind on the job and their eyes on the environment. It also reduces the need for unnecessary movements keeping the driver feeling fresher for longer.

2. Eliminating strain

Strain-related injuries suffered by drivers can have long-term impact on their health. The neck, shoulders, upper back and forearms are all particularly susceptible, mainly through overstretching for levers and excessive cab vibration. With sick pay and potentially compensation, good ergonomic design makes sound economic sense.

Pay special attention to reach trucks - where mounting and dismounting the truck over 100 times in a shift can really take its toll on the operator's joints. Simple touches like wide, non-slip steps, good grab handles and a lower seat position can reduce the strain enormously... And some trucks go further still. When Mitsubishi designed the SENSIA range of reach trucks, we even created a console that folds away to make things as easy as possible.

3. Reducing damage

Visibility is a factor in up to 80% of accidents, so look for a cabin design that gives clear, wide open views all around – as well as a high vision mast. Good ergonomics helps here, too. Obviously, a tired or distracted driver is not going to be at their sharpest – and that makes accidents more likely. Since two-thirds of forklift accident victims are colleagues on foot, helping the driver to focus makes work safer for everyone. But reducing accident risk doesn't just protect your workforce. If it happens often enough, minor damage to trucks, racking and stock can quickly add up to a huge – and largely uninsured – expense.

4. Protecting limbs

Working in very tight and confined spaces, it is vital to consider the space within a reach truck's compartment to ensure it is big enough to protect all of your driver. A compartment which is too small could result in an operator's shoulder, arm or leg protruding from the compartment... creating a very real danger of trapping or scraping a limb against racking walls. In developing SENSIA, Mitsubishi designers looked to maximise the space available within the compartment itself – ensuring operators' limbs are protected against injuries during narrow aisle operations.

Information for this article was sourced from www.forkliftbriefing.com. For further forklift safety information contact MLA Holdings on 131 652 or www.mlaholdings.com.au.