

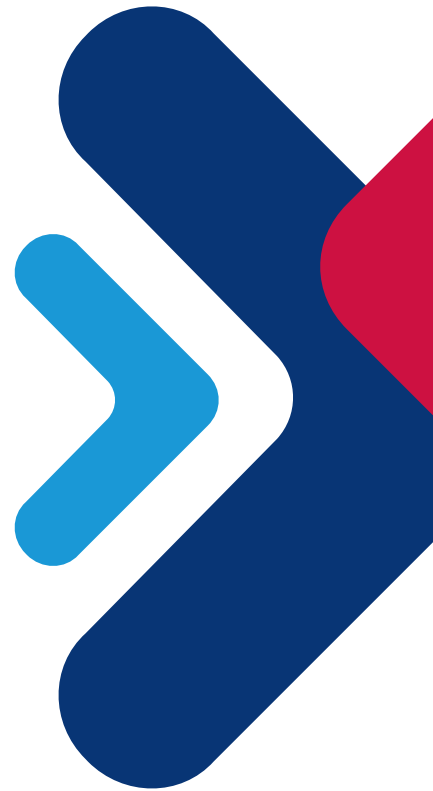
Learning from mistakes: Enhance safety through effective manager and supervisor training

As National Forklift Safety Day turns its attention to learning from mistakes, it is an ideal time to consider an often-overlooked area in lift truck operational safety – training for managers and supervisors.

By their very nature, forklift operations are fraught with potential hazards and inefficiencies. Health and Safety Executive statistics show that lift trucks are involved in around 25% of all workplace transport accidents. And when a material handling equipment (MHE) incident happens, often it is operators that are held to account, with training taking the blame.

However, incidents often occur as a result of poor or non-existent supervision. Manager and supervisor responsibilities extend far beyond hitting productivity targets. Their role also requires them to oversee forklift operations and ensure safety protocols and best practices are being adhered to.

A lack of proper oversight from managers and supervisors can lead to mistakes, whether that's improper handling, incorrect processes being followed, or lapses in important maintenance. These factors can increase risk and cause incidents. Fortunately, training for MHE managers and supervisors can help mitigate these risks, as well as supporting compliance.





The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) mandates that supervisors should be adequately trained. Stating: “Every employer shall ensure that any of his employees who supervises or manages the use of work equipment has received adequate training for purposes of health and safety, including training in the methods which may be adopted when using the work equipment, any risks which such use may entail and precautions to be taken.”

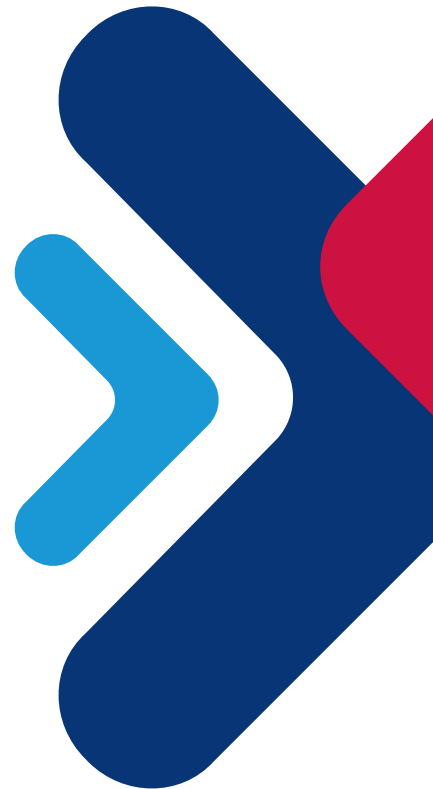
As all sites are different, these regulations do not stipulate what must be included in training. Training providers recommend that effective training programs for MHE managers and supervisors should cover at minimum:

1. Roles and responsibilities of a supervisor or manager
2. Relevant guidance and regulations and how to comply
3. Health and safety and risk assessment for forklift operations
4. Lift truck operator training and qualification requirements for compliance and safety

These topics help equip candidates with the skills and knowledge to manage and supervise MHE operations efficiently, with a core focus on safety.

Investing in the correct training for MHE managers and supervisors leads to tangible benefits. These include reduced accidents, better compliance with safety regulations, and enhanced efficiency. However, to truly learn and improve, managers and supervisors should also integrate regular audits, performance reviews, and feedback loops to help maintain ongoing high safety standards.

In summary, MHE managers and supervisors are a critical link between operational success, safety, and compliance. And that surely is something no lift truck operation can afford to overlook.





Gavin Hutchinson,
Head of Technical Services for RTITB
and Chairperson of the Accrediting
Bodies Association for Workplace
Transport (ABA)

With over 25 years of dedicated experience in the logistics and warehousing sector, Gavin has a profound understanding of the logistics and transport industry's intricate operations. For the past 23 years, he has been a registered and qualified RTITB lift truck instructor, imparting comprehensive operator and instructor training for countless individuals, ensuring the smooth and safe operation of machinery and equipping instructors with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively train others on lift truck operations.

Gavin also has experience as an Auditor and Examiner. He has been with RTITB for 9 years and currently leads the RTITB Technical team to uphold the highest standards of safety and efficiency. Gavin was appointed Chairperson of the Accrediting Bodies Association for Workplace Transport (ABA) in January 2024.

