

## Forklift Truck Operator

A forklift truck operator uses a forklift truck to load, unload, move and stack heavy goods which are stored on wooden trays or pallets or in wire cages, or to move materials around construction sites.

### The Work

You could be:

- picking up the load, usually on pallets or crates, using the truck's lifting equipment
- checking that the load on the forklift truck is secure
- making sure there are no obstacles on your route, or any other safety risks
- using the controls to drive the truck forwards and backwards
- sometimes driving in tight spaces and on slopes
- unloading the goods and stacking them, ensuring any fragile items are handled correctly
- inspecting the truck and equipment for faults and doing minor repairs
- stacking empty pallets and crates
- sometimes helping with other tasks, such as loading or unloading lorries.

### Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2025 the National Minimum Wage is £10.00 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.21 an hour.

Newly trained forklift drivers can earn around £22,000 a year. With experience this can rise to £28,000 a year. In some cases senior forklift drivers can earn over £30,000 a year if operating certain types of forklift.

### Conditions

- You might work in a factory, goods yard, haulage depot, store, warehouse or on a construction site.
- You may have to work in cold and draughty, noisy or dusty conditions.
- In some cases, you would have to work outside in all weathers.
- Your hours of work would vary depending on the company, but might include shift work, evenings and weekends.

### Getting In

- No formal qualifications are required but you may have to pass an aptitude test.
- You must have completed approved training before using the forklift. This may be provided by your employer.
- You must be over 18 to drive a forklift truck unsupervised, however training can be started earlier.
- You need to be fit.
- You may need to pass a medical examination.
- If working on a construction site, you would need the relevant CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card.
- You may get into this type of work through a Modern Apprenticeship in Freight Logistics: Warehousing and Storage at SCQF Level 5.

## What Does It Take

You need to be:

- responsible
- accurate in your work
- good at judging weights and distances
- aware of safety matters
- able to follow written instructions and keep records.

You should have:

- patience and good concentration
- the ability to work both quickly and efficiently
- good co-ordination.

## Training

- Initial training is usually provided by your employer either through an internal or external training organisation or a forklift truck manufacturer.
- The course would normally take between 1 and 5 days and include practical instruction, health and safety issues and basic truck maintenance.
- The initial training would be followed by on the job training supervised by an experienced operator.
- You may work towards a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Warehousing, Storage and Distribution (SCQF Levels 5 and 6).

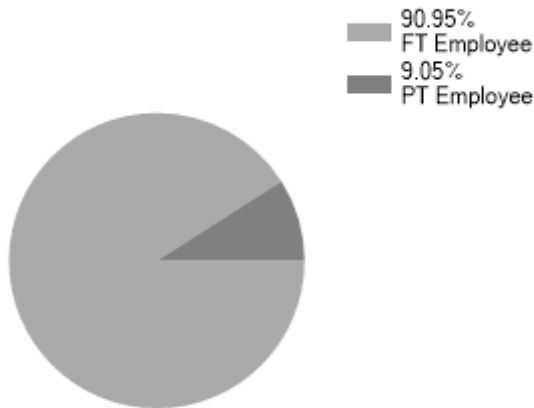
## Getting On

- You might train for the different types of forklift licences including Counterbalance, Reach Truck and Telescopic.
- After experience, you may be able to gain promotion to a supervisory position.
- You could train to be an instructor of other forklift truck drivers.
- There can be opportunities to move on to other work within the storage and warehouse sector such as a plant or crane operator, or a plant mechanic.

Contacts

## Statistics

Employment Status UK %

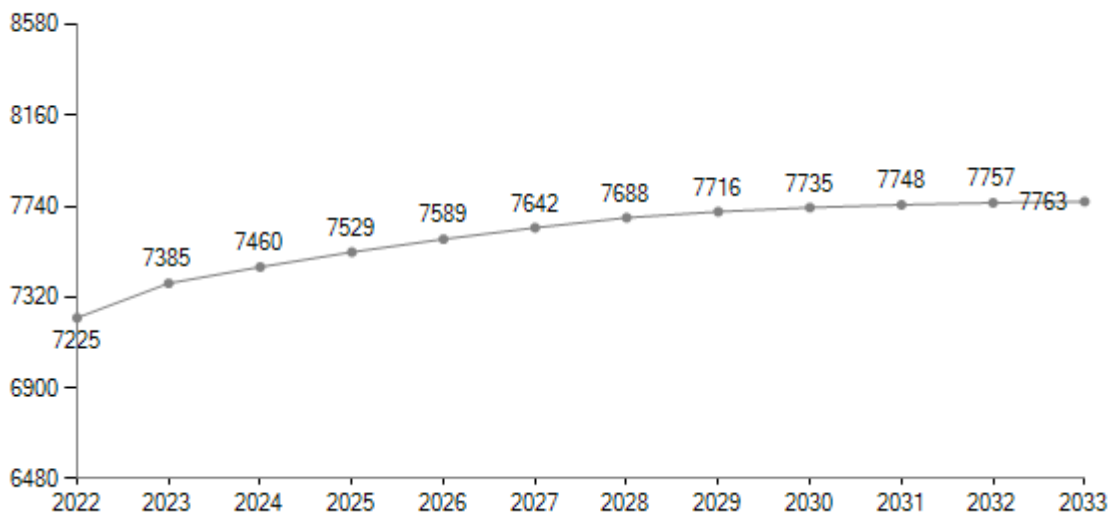


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)