

## SAFE USE OF CRANE FORKS (ALL TYPES)

Applies to: Eichinger, Conquip, Probst, Scanlift, and similar fixed, adjustable, or self-balancing crane forks

### **Purpose**

Crane forks are designed for lifting and transporting palletised loads, packs of bricks, blocks, or bagged materials using a crane, hoist, or lifting beam.

They provide a quick and efficient way to move loads vertically when forklifts cannot be used.

This leaflet provides safe use guidance to prevent accidents, overloading, or dropped loads.

### **Before Use**

- Inspect the fork – Check tines, frame, springs, chains, and balancing mechanisms for cracks, wear, deformation, or missing parts.
- Verify SWL (Safe Working Load) – The fork's rated capacity must exceed the total load weight, including the lifting accessories.
- Check certification – Ensure the crane fork and any lifting accessories (chains, slings, shackles) have valid inspection and test tags.
- Confirm configuration – Adjust the fork width and height for the load size as per manufacturer's instructions.
- Check the balancing system – On self-balancing types, ensure counterweight and spring assemblies move freely.
- Ensure the load is suitable – Only lift stable, secured, and evenly stacked loads on solid pallets.
- Confirm crane and lifting gear compatibility – Ensure headroom, reach, and SWL are sufficient for the load and fork assembly.
- Ensure operator competence – Only trained and authorised personnel should attach, guide, or signal lifts.

### **During Operation**

- Position correctly – Lower the fork vertically and insert tines fully beneath the pallet or load.
- Balance properly – Adjust or allow the fork to self-level before lifting clear of the ground.
- Attach load safety chain or retaining net (if fitted) to prevent load displacement during lifting.
- Lift vertically – Avoid dragging or side-loading the tines.
- Raise the load slowly and smoothly – no jerks or sudden movements.
- Keep the load level and stable at all times.
- Ensure no personnel are beneath or near the suspended load.
- Use tag lines to steady large or unstable loads.
- Maintain clear visual communication or radio contact with the crane operator.

### **Do Not**

- Exceed the rated capacity of the crane fork or crane.
- Use for unpalletised, loose, or irregular materials.
- Use damaged, uncertified, or modified forks.
- Lift loads that overhang excessively or are unevenly distributed.
- Stand beneath or near suspended loads.
- Leave suspended loads unattended.

- Use in high winds or poor visibility.
- Use the forks for prying, levering, or ground transport.

### **After Use**

- Place the fork on firm, level ground before disconnecting.
- Clean and inspect tines, frame, and moving parts.
- Remove debris, dirt, or mortar build-up from tines and slides.
- Check the balance mechanism and chains for smooth function.
- Tag out and report any defects to your supervisor.
- Store in a dry, secure area away from vehicle traffic.

### **Safety Reminders**

- Always follow the manufacturer's operating instructions.
- Conduct a pre-use inspection before every lift.
- Never exceed the SWL of the fork, crane, or associated gear.
- Keep personnel out of the lifting area and establish exclusion zones.
- Use appropriate PPE: helmet, gloves, safety boots, and high-visibility clothing.
- Ensure regular thorough examination by a competent person per LOLER regulations.
- Always secure the load with a restraint chain or bar when required.

### **Support and Maintenance**

For service, inspection, and spare parts, contact your local Lifting Gear and Safety Depot

## **Depot List**

**Bristol:** 0117 9714883  
**Avonmouth:** 0117 9550456  
**Newport:** 01633 334450  
**Port Talbot:** 01639 540007  
**Pembroke:** 01646 574000  
**Plymouth:** 01752 474488  
**Fareham:** 01329 550988  
**Redruth:** 01209 703990