



# Safe Handling

Warehouses have a reputation for being unsafe places to work. After all, lift truck operators under pressure have no time to waste.

**Theo Egberts** has found a large number of products on the market that go some way towards **improving safety in the warehouse.**

Figures don't lie: the warehouse is one of the top four unsafe workplaces, according to research by the Arbeidsinspectie – the Dutch Health and Safety Inspectorate – based on a large number of lift truck accidents. Every year in the Netherlands, 1,700 people require immediate medical attention due to forklift-truck related injuries. Unfortunately, these accidents are responsible for an average of 5 fatalities every year.

**“The primary cause of these accidents is a lack of attention on the part of forklift operators as well as pedestrians walking through the warehouse.”**

Clear zones separating vehicular and pedestrian paths go some way towards avoiding accidents. Additionally, there is a whole host of products and technical solutions aimed at improving safety in the warehouse. These investments undoubtedly result in cost savings, because the cost price of an accident and damage is always much higher, apart from the cost of human suffering and the potential of consequential damage and downtime.

### Only for professionals

The second major cause of forklift accidents is attributable to the operator's training. Only a professional can deliver professional results – which advocates the necessity of high-calibre training and periodic monitoring of skills.

OK, we can assume that the operator is fully trained. But how can you monitor or ensure that only the trained operator is the one actually driving the lift truck? Personally handing over the truck's ignition key is not the right way to do this. Many operators leave the key in the ignition, lose it or lend it out. Furthermore, a key will fit into virtually any type of truck.

**Mobile Easykey** is a much simpler solution. The system controls not only access to the truck via an electronic key, but it can also be fitted with various different options. The key is linked to a specific person, it can have a specific validity duration (convenient with temporary staff) and the system automatically switches the truck off if it has been idling for a specific time period.

Using **CRASH+**, Mobile Easykey can also register all collisions in which the truck is involved. Once the preset collision value has been exceeded, the engine is safely switched off and can then only be released by an authorised person. All data relating to time, operator and degree of impact is stored.



Mobile Easykey therefore forms the ideal basis for fleet management, the recording of actual operating hours and the monitoring of battery functions. Data transfer is simple using SMS, Blue Tooth or WLAN.

### Shocking news

Despite top-class training and controlled access to the truck, a collision between the truck and a column, wall corner or racking can never be ruled out. Collision can cause damage to the truck, the operator, the building, the racking and the goods either stored on the racking or being moved by the truck. For this scenario, Sentry has developed a range of products that can be placed around items requiring protection very simply and without the need for additional fastenings. Boring holes in the floor or other construction parts is unnecessary. The conspicuous yellow **Sentry protectors** absorb the shock, return to their original shape after a collision and are extremely strong.

Collision with the pallet or load itself is also a very common problem. The shock can cause damage to the pallet, so that the upper deck splinters, meaning that the load-bearing capacity is reduced and the pallet no longer sits safely on the racking. Impact can also result in direct damage to goods on the pallet. A load can become unstable and even fall off the pallet. Using **Pallet Dawg**, that problem is a thing of the past. The Pallet Dawg attaches between the forks on the lift truck as a pallet bumper cushion. When a pallet is picked up, the bumper transfers the force from the sides of the pallet to the much stronger middle section. The pallet remains intact, as do the goods that sit on it. →



**1,2. Mobile EasyKey** controls access to the truck and can be personalised to specific options (Image courtesy of MobileEasykey/Crepa) [www.mobileeasykey.com](http://www.mobileeasykey.com)  
**3. Column Sentry** protectors absorb the shock of collisions and reduce damage to buildings and trucks. (Image courtesy of Sentry/Crepa) [www.sentrypro.com](http://www.sentrypro.com)



## The time is now ripe

Uncertain economic times are particularly suited to critically reviewing warehouse safety issues. With the logistic pressure off the boil, the way is clear to carry out repairs to damaged rackings, take appropriate protective measures and equip trucks with safety-enhancing systems. Measures taken to bring safety issues up to standard will without doubt bear fruit in the future when internal logistics are once again running at full power.

- 4. The **IWS Pilotprotector** is a much more effective solution for keeping the operator within the cabin. (Image courtesy of IWS/Crepa) [www.pilotprotector.com](http://www.pilotprotector.com)
- 5. As the lift truck drives over **Profilgate**, the brushes automatically clean the wheels, rollers or bands. (Image courtesy of Heute GmbH/Crepa) [www.profilgate.com](http://www.profilgate.com)
- 6. Ensure drivers use basic safety installations, like seatbelts, to reduce injuries
- 7. The **Pallet Dawg** reduces damage to pallets by transferring load from sides to middle (Image courtesy of BST Technologies/Crepa) [www.palletdawg.com](http://www.palletdawg.com)



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## Driving at the speed of light

Due to the enormous weight of the lift truck and its load, the consequences of a collision are often much greater than expected. Driving more slowly is one way of limiting damage, but for many operators this is an onerous task. Automatic speed limiters help resolve this issue. Part of the solution can be to subdivide the warehouse or business park into zones, so that each area has an appropriate maximum speed limit.

**“Investments in safety have resulted in direct cost savings.”**

Warehouses and storage transit sheds are usually not well lit. This is precisely why it is so important to equip the lift truck with proper driving and working lights. This allows other users of the warehouse to see the truck sooner and then act accordingly. The combination of highly visible flashing orange lights and an effective reverse warning alarm ensures that the direction in which the truck is travelling is always clear.

## See what you're doing

Working with a lift truck at great heights is likewise a major cause of problems. The result of inserting the fork at the wrong height is to relentlessly push the pallet out of the racking. Although this problem can be avoided by positioning platforms between the beams, this does not make it any easier to insert the fork carefully at exactly the right height. A forward-looking camera helps with positioning and is also a useful aid when moving loads at double-deep locations.

A height-selector or lift-height indicator is another option for facilitating working at greater heights. Thanks to the digital instrument panel on modern forklift and warehouse trucks, these functions are increasingly integrated on the display panel,

making separate displays unnecessary.

To enable good vision when inside the truck, mirrors are indispensable. Of especial importance is the panoramic rear-view mirror, which is an excellent way of maintaining a wide view of the working environment around the rear side of the truck. Each movement perceived by the operator in the mirror is a signal to take extra care.

## Warehouse scrubs up well

Dirt and moisture constitute a danger, both inside and outside the warehouse itself. Forklift and warehouse trucks can slip and become uncontrollable. To avoid this situation, **Profilgate** has been developed. This is a completely mechanical system of roll-on and roll-off plates, between which a grate with brushes is positioned. As the lift truck drives over Profilgate, the brushes automatically clean the wheels, rollers or bands. The tray under the brushes traps the dirt, reducing the amount of contaminants and sand over the work floor. In wet weather, Profilgate also has a drying effect. The system can be loaded without any problems up to 10 ton.

Despite all safety measures, a lift truck can still tip over. This is an inherent risk with any lift truck. What is important is that if the truck tips over, the operator remains in his 'safe' position inside the cabin. Hip belts keep operators in their seats, but operators dislike wearing them because they limit freedom of movement when reversing.

The **Pilot Protector** is a much more effective solution for keeping the operator within the cabin. It is a protective grid in the shape of a door. Easy to open and easy to close. The Pilot Protector also allows the process of switching the truck on and off in a completely safe manner. It is one of the many ways in which to reduce the grim statistic for lift truck accidents and to upgrade the warehouse into a much safer place to work.

## Summary

In short, investing in safety measures can contribute in many ways – directly and indirectly – to cost savings. There are savings to be made on operator costs, the cost of racking as well as savings on building-related costs, such as flooring, walls and columns. The benefits of choosing certainty over uncertainty are nowhere so evident as in the area of internal logistics. And if you've always been too busy in the past to take care of these matters, now is the time to act! Take the opportunity and reap the rewards!

Article feedback is welcome: [Theo@eurekapub.eu](mailto:Theo@eurekapub.eu)

## Direct savings

“Investments in safety have resulted in direct cost savings,” according to Hans Raats, Personnel and Rolling Stock coordinator for beer brewer Bavaria, which exports its beers worldwide from Lieshout (NL). “Cat Lift Trucks dealer Crepa supplied us with Easykey, meaning that only a specific operator can use the truck. The operator logs in with his own Bavaria personnel pass, thus preventing misuse of the truck and damage caused by unauthorised personnel. “Column Sentry protects the building and the trucks, with the result that we have far fewer repair costs.” Thanks to Pallet Dawg, broken pallets are virtually a thing of the past and we have less product damage. Profilgate ensures that a far lower amount of contaminants and sand swirls through the warehouse. With a clean fleet of trucks, we have less wear and tear to the trucks and less spoiling of our product.”



## Intelligent control

Cat Lift Trucks dealer Briggs Equipment helped Whitworths, a manufacturer of healthy snacks, to increase the efficiency and productivity of its truck fleet while lowering costs. Through a combination of specifying multi-functional trucks and supporting accessories Whitworths fleet has been reduced by 20%. Not only does this lower overall costs but Chris Owen, Supply Chain Manager, comments on the new fleet arrangements,

**“We were targeting for 50% year on year reduction in damage costs, so we needed an effective solution and quickly...”**

This has helped to provide greater accountability for accidents and damage and helped to reduce damage around the site significantly.”

Date, Event, Location, Website	Overview
10-11 September <b>HICL2009 Hamburg International Conference of Logistics 2009</b> Hamburg, Germany <a href="http://www.hicl.org">www.hicl.org</a>	The HICL will provide a multi disciplinary network and forum for scientists and practitioners involved in logistics and supply chain management to interact with each other and exchange ideas and information on the latest issues in this field.
12-20 September <b>Edil Levante Abitare</b> Fiera del Levante, Bari, Italy <a href="http://www.fieradellevante.it">www.fieradellevante.it</a>	International Exhibition of Materials, Equipment and Installations for the Residential Equipment Industry.
14-18 September <b>Transport a Logistika 2009</b> Brno, Czech Republic <a href="http://www.bvv.cz">www.bvv.cz</a>	Transport a Logistika is an international Fair for Transport & Logistics, the most important presentation of transport and logistics in Central Europe held concurrently with the International Engineering Fair MSV, the unique potential of future clients, new contacts and deals.
21-27 September <b>National Fork Lift Safety Week</b> Various locations in the UK, TBC <a href="http://www.fork-truck.org.uk">www.fork-truck.org.uk</a>	National awareness campaign aimed at reducing Britain's daily fork lift accident toll. Most at risk are pedestrians, so this week is essential for not only operators, but colleagues and visitors too.
29-30 September <b>Cool Logistics 09</b> Hamburg, Germany <a href="http://www.coollogisticsconference.com">www.coollogisticsconference.com</a>	Staged in the leading refrigerated cargo hub of Hamburg, the 2nd Cool Logistics conference will revisit the fundamentals of the global reefer trades and food distribution chains from farm to shelf.
29 Sept-1 Oct <b>LogIntern 2009</b> Nuremberg, Germany <a href="http://www.logintern.de">www.logintern.de</a>	LogIntern presents efficient conveying, handling and storage equipment and the associated information technologies and specifically focuses on in-plant logistics.
30th September <b>FLTA National Fork Lift Truck Safety Conference</b> Warwick, United Kingdom <a href="http://www.fork-truck.org.uk">www.fork-truck.org.uk</a>	This year's theme is 'Understanding and Communicating the Risks', and includes latest research, best practice and a keynote speech from the HSE.
3-5 October <b>Intermodal 2009</b> Feria Valencia, Spain <a href="http://www.intermodal-events.com">www.intermodal-events.com</a>	Intermodal is the world's leading exhibition and conference for all companies associated with the container and intermodal industries.
6-7 October <b>Global Distribution Strategies Conference</b> Brussels, Belgium <a href="http://www.ticonferences.com/gds_europe/strategic-overview">www.ticonferences.com/gds_europe/strategic-overview</a>	Global Distribution Strategies 2009 will address all these issues by bringing together the leading practitioners in the industry within a single forum, combined with Ti's own research on the sector.
15-18 October <b>2nd Mersin Logistics &amp; Transportation Fair</b> Mersin, Turkey <a href="http://www.mersintransport.com">www.mersintransport.com</a>	Exhibit includes Conveyor systems, highway transportation, sea transportation, air transportation, cargo and courier services, logistics, unloading-uploading equipments, goods assembling, clearance, commercial vehicles, trucks, trailers, storage systems, forklift, trans pallets, packaging equipments.
10-14 November <b>Logistica 2009</b> Utrecht, Netherlands <a href="http://www.logistica-online.nl">www.logistica-online.nl</a>	Logistica is the leading trade fair in the field of material handling in the Benelux region and an important fair on the European calendar. The last event attracted over 300 exhibitors and 26.529 visitors - and a lot of business.