



# Tailgate Safety Training for Landscaping and Horticultural Services

Agricultural Safety Program, 590 Woody Hayes Drive, Columbus, OH 43210

## Safe Use of Hand Pallet Trucks and Electric Carts

**Objective: Use hand pallet trucks and electric carts safely in the workplace.**

### *How to Use This Module*

Hand pallet trucks and electric carts make moving materials easy. But they need to be used safely to avoid injuries. For this module:

- Read the information below on how to use trucks and carts safely.
- Review operating instructions for trucks and carts you use.
- Ask your supervisor to demonstrate working with a truck or a cart.
- Discuss truck and cart accidents and prevention strategies.
- Review the important points.
- Take the True/False quiz to check your learning.

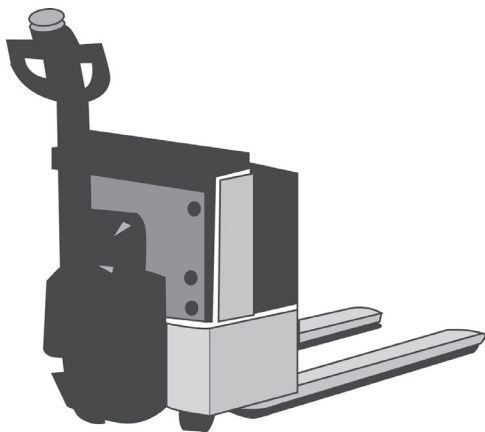
### Background

Moving materials with a hand pallet truck or electric cart may seem easy, but safe handling requires skill.

- Raise the forks by pushing the actuating lever down and pumping the handle. This is the only time the handle should be down — to jack the pallet. A 1-inch clearance between the floor and pallet is usually sufficient.
- Put the actuating lever in a neutral or middle position to move the load. This position disengages the lifting mechanism and frees the handle from hydraulic resistance, but keeps the forks raised. When the lever is released, it will automatically return to the neutral position.

### For Safe Operation

- Pay attention to maximum load limits. Never overload.
- Check brakes, steering, controls, forks, hoists, and warning devices. Report any problems to your supervisor.
- Watch for water, oil, or other liquids on the floor. Report any wet surface to your supervisor.
- If possible, avoid moving loads up or down ramps.
- Keep the load uphill when going up or down any incline.
- Keep the forks about 4 to 6 inches above the ground.
- Do not turn the handle too fast. This can cause the load to shift.
- Watch for clearances on both sides of the aisle.



- Do not carry riders on the hand pallet truck.
- Center the forks evenly under the load to maintain good balance.
- Ensure the stability of the load.
- Use both forks for lifting a load.
- Pull rather than push loads for increased maneuverability.
- Maneuvering loads using the neutral position reduces operator fatigue.
- Operate at controllable speeds. Hand pallet trucks do not have brakes.
- Allow plenty of room to stop.
- Be aware of other people and forklifts in or near your work area.
- Always be alert on loading docks. Stay away from the edge of the dock.
- If you are loading or unloading a truck at a dock, enter or exit the truck squarely.
- Park the pallet truck out of traffic areas in a safe, level place with the forks lowered.
- The handle should be left in the up position to eliminate tripping hazards.

## Review These Important Points

- Maneuvering loads in the neutral position reduces operator fatigue.
- Keep pallet trucks or electric carts out of traffic areas when forks are lowered.
- Never use one fork to lift a load.
- No riders on the pallet truck or electric cart.

## About These Modules

The author team for the training modules in the landscape and horticultural tailgate training series includes Dee Jepsen, Program Director, Agricultural Safety and Health, Ohio State University Extension; Michael Wonacott, Research Specialist, Vocational Education; Peter Ling, Greenhouse Specialist; and Thomas Bean, Agricultural Safety Specialist. Modules were developed with funding from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Grant Number 46E3-HT09.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the U.S. Department of Labor.

Answer Key: 1 = F, 2 = F, 3 = T, 4 = T, 5 = T.

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*Name* \_\_\_\_\_

### True or False?

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Push the load.  | T | F |
| 2. Carry as much as the hand pallet truck will hold.                           | T | F |
| 3. Pallet trucks do not have brakes.   | T | F |
| 4. A clearance of one inch between the floor and pallet is usually sufficient. | T | F |
| 5. Operate the hand pallet truck at a safe speed to avoid accidents.           | T | F |