



PAYING THE PRICE:

Do LPG-powered Forklifts Limit Your Hiring Pool and Hurt Inclusivity?

Workforce shortages continue to be a top concern for many companies today. With such fierce competition for skilled and motivated workers, new hires are difficult to get and may not stay long if they get a better offer or working conditions down the street. According to a [Manpower Group survey](#), 75% of employers globally report difficulty in filling roles, which is a 17-year high.

Many operations tend to focus primarily on hiring new employees – filling routinely vacated positions while trying to balance inclusivity as a priority. But retaining employees and minimizing churn are becoming increasingly important because onboarding and training new associates is time-consuming and expensive.



Additionally, the number of workers compared to available jobs will make adding new workers increasingly challenging and retaining workers even more critical. Recent employment data indicates there are [9.5 million job openings and only 6.5 million unemployed workers](#). So even at full employment, there will still be roughly 3 million empty jobs with no workers to fill them.

For warehousing, manufacturing and logistics companies, the key to maintaining a skilled and motivated workforce will be to create a more comfortable, safer environment for employees, which can also help attract a broader and more inclusive pool of talent as new employees. To help accomplish this, an often overlooked issue many workers reckon with on a repetitive, daily basis is liquid propane (LPG)-powered forklifts.

While running LPG-powered forklifts often creates disadvantages in areas such as sustainability and operating costs, they also create challenges for hiring and maintaining your workforce.

LPG Creates Artificial Height Requirements

A job duty of forklift operators is routinely changing-out empty LPG tanks for full ones. Many managers don't give this a second thought, not realizing this requirement often constrains accessibility of certain candidates who are shorter in physical stature to forklift operating jobs.

Full LPG tanks can weigh up to 40 pounds and their mounting position on the back of a forklift is typically 4 feet or taller in height - meaning those physically shorter would need to routinely heft that weight above their shoulders while also controlling it in mid-air. This immediately reduces their accessibility to forklift operating job opportunities that run LPG-powered equipment – unless they are willing to put themselves at risk for physical injury.

When the workplace injury statistics also show that [38% of injuries to material movers are musculoskeletal](#),



the injury risk for many potential operators who are shorter in stature is simply too much for them to accept – no matter how dedicated they may be.

Government surveys have found [lifting or lowering overexertion](#) was the second most common cause of transportation and warehousing injuries involving days away from work. The [World Health Organization](#) also reports musculoskeletal conditions are the leading contributor to disability worldwide, with lower back pain being the leading cause in 160 countries.

LPG Excludes Many Disabled and Disadvantaged Workers

The same requirements for lifting and balancing LPG tanks during change-outs also potentially discourages many people with chronic injuries, arthritis and disabilities from joining your hiring pool.

The jobless rate for people with disabilities is [twice that of those without disabilities](#). So changing LPG tanks effectively excludes a significant group of potential workers who may have otherwise been skilled and motivated members of your forklift operator team.

Physical requirements for changing LPG tanks can also dissuade those with chronic musculoskeletal conditions like arthritis from applying to forklift operator positions. With [arthritis affecting 26% of adults 45-64 years of age](#), this could further diminish your hiring pool by discouraging older workers from applying to forklift operator jobs.

This means running traditional LPG equipment could be doing more than limiting your job candidate pool based on height, but also jeopardizing your corporate diversity hiring performance - backhandedly excluding disabled and older workers from your forklift operator teams.

LPG Adversely Impacts All of Your Candidate Options

While some managers may feel running LPG-powered equipment and changing LPG tanks leaves their hiring options outside of these disaffected groups unchanged, recent studies tell a different story.

Diversity has been growing in importance for people seeking employment. A 2020 survey by Glassdoor



found that [76% of job seekers and employees](#) report that a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers.

When it comes to retention, another recent survey from CNBC/SurveyMonkey shows that nearly [80% of employees](#) want to work for a company that values diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) issues. “Workers who are satisfied with their company’s efforts on [DEI] issues are actually happier with their jobs...” says Laura Wronski, a research science manager at SurveyMonkey.

So the implications of continuing to run LPG-powered forklifts with the required tank changing could stifle your ability to hire and even retain motivated workers, no matter who they are.



Electrification Equals Employee Attraction & Inclusion

Hiring people who have traditionally been excluded from warehouse jobs can create a more diverse and inclusive environment within your company. By replacing LPG-powered forklifts with electric forklifts, repetitive lifting and changing of heavy LPG tanks is no longer needed and its related personnel restrictions no longer a factor.

When done properly, electrification often replaces operators muscling-around weighty LPG tanks with simple equipment plug-ins during work breaks and stoppages – eliminating that heavy lifting and potential for related musculoskeletal injuries. This easing of operator burden gives operations the potential to attract a wider pool of talent and retain more skilled

and motivated forklift operators versus operations still clinging to their traditional LPG equipment.

Depending on the nature of your operations, there are a variety of battery technologies that can be deployed to effectively replace your LPG-powered equipment and enable “opportunity charging” during breaks, between shifts and other work stoppages.

This means people with less lifting capabilities – such as smaller-sized adults, older workers, those with chronic conditions such as arthritis and people with disabilities can now be productive members of your team.

Power Equipment. Empower People.

Choosing the right batteries and chargers is critical to the success of your conversion to electric in terms of productivity, ownership costs and employee satisfaction. To help you find the best solution that addresses all these, contact EnerSys® for a power study and recommendations based on your goals.

EnerSys® is the only solution provider that offers all major battery technologies for material handling equipment and combines your operational data with advanced simulation modeling to identify an optimal equipment power system that performs as well or even better than your current LPG forklifts. Visit us online at [EnerSys.com](https://www.enerSys.com) to learn more.



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