



**ideas @ work**

# Why Ride? When You Can WALK

According to 2008 data from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number one cause of lift truck related work fatalities is pedestrians being struck by the vehicle. [1]

**In many operations ride on lift trucks are used not only for loading trailers or in storage areas, but where people are working. In areas such as production rooms or around packing stations, recurring material handling tasks can often be accomplished by walk behind lift trucks which create a safer work environment and reduce cost.**

While most ride on lift trucks weigh double their rated capacity, walk behind lift trucks such as straddle stackers weigh just about half. This fundamental design difference translates into significantly lower costs as well as obvious workplace safety benefits.

In regard to equipment costs, less weight means less shock and vibration to major components over time. Less weight means less work for the drive motor, transmission and electrical systems. Less weight means that a walkie stacker can be typically acquired and maintained for less than 50% of the cost of a similarly rated sit down electric lift truck.

**Example:**

**Ride on electric lift truck 4,000lb capacity**

Weight	Cost	Maintenance	Cost 5yrs / 2500 hours
8,000lbs	\$30,000	\$1.50/hour	\$33,750

**Walkie stacker 4,000lb capacity**

Weight	Cost	Maintenance	Cost 5yrs / 2500 hours
2,200lbs	\$14,000	\$0.50/hour	\$15,250

While walkie equipment has significant cost and safety benefits, it is true that there are some jobs where a walkie is not the best choice. Primarily these jobs include operation at high speed over long distances, or navigation over uneven surfaces.

However, there are just as many jobs where a walkie outperforms other equipment types. These jobs includes those where operation in very tight areas is required, where work positioning is needed, or where accessing areas like mezzanines or second levels is required.



## Safety first.

Speed and productivity tend to drive many decisions in business. However, safety is what shapes decisions in business as expenses resulting from work related injuries are one of the single biggest drivers of operating cost.

### Statistics on lift truck safety

- According to 2008 data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number one cause of lift truck related work fatalities is pedestrians being struck by the vehicle. [1]
- OSHA estimates that 110,000 lift truck accidents occur each year. [2]
- Approximately every 3 days, someone in the US is killed in a forklift related accident [2]
- Approximately 31,600 employees suffer some type of injury from a lift truck each year. [2]
- One in six of all workplace fatalities in this country are forklift related. [2]
- According to OSHA, approximately 70% of all lift truck accidents reported could have been avoided with proper safety measures. [2]

### Why ride? When you can WALK.

This question is meant to help guide equipment decisions. If you are lifting pallets 20' in the air and have a 500,000 square foot warehouse, you should ride. If you are going in and out of trailers over a dock for hours each day, you should ride. If you are transporting goods 100s of yards from production to the shipping department, you should really buy some conveyor or an AGV before someone notices. Just saying...

However, for all of the recurring tasks in-between those big tasks, you are likely to be better off using a walk behind lift truck. If not to replace other equipment, to supplement it.

Using walkies for in-between tasks will drive down overall fleet costs because they operate cheaper, and since they are lighter and slower, workplace safety will be improved.

[1] U.S. Department of Labor, [2] "Towards Improved Forklift Safety" National Institute of Standards and Technology, Oct 2009 – Bircher America Inc.

## Walkies sound pretty good... what was that about tight areas and work positioning?

While a sit-down truck may take an eleven or twelve foot aisle to make a right angle turn with a 40" x 48" pallet, a walkie stacker can typically perform this maneuver in seven or eight feet. If storage racking is involved and beams on the bottom level are used to accommodate straddle legs, walkie stackers can turn loads even tighter. Whether navigating around production areas or maximizing storage density for slow moving goods, the compact and unrivaled turns of a walkie stacker can be a major benefit.

When it comes to work positioning, there are a few advantages a walkie stacker also delivers compared to other equipment options. First and foremost, a walkie stacker can pick loads up from the ground, whereas a lift table often needs to be loaded by another machine. Another advantage of a walkie stacker when used as a work positioner is its mobility. After a load is built or unstacked, a walkie can then immediately shuttle the product to the next step in a process or travel to get more goods without the need of additional personnel or machinery. By putting a relatively inexpensive and versatile machine in the hands of workers, productivity can also be greatly increased.

### Wait... did you say productivity?

Yes, this white paper could of just as easily been called, **Why Wait? When You Can Work.**

Of all of the things that walk behind equipment offers, productivity is maybe the one that gets overlooked the most. Yes, walkies travel at walk behind speed, but what about the time that line workers or shipping staff waste waiting for a ride on vehicle to come and move a load?

**Give workers the means to do more work with a safe and productive walkie from Big Joe.**