Pallet Jack Manual and Electric Daily Safety Checklist

1.0 Objective & Intent

The objective of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish a mandatory daily safety checklist for both manual and electric pallet jacks used within the cabinet and millwork manufacturing facility. This procedure is designed to prevent material handling accidents, reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries, and ensure compliance with WorkSafeBC regulations (OHS Regulation Part 16: Mobile Equipment). The specific risk mitigated includes uncontrolled movement, load instability, pinch point injuries, and electrical hazards associated with battery-powered equipment.

2.0 Operational Scope

This procedure applies to all manual pallet jacks (hand-operated hydraulic jacks) and electric pallet jacks (walkie-rider or walk-behind powered units) used in the production floor, warehouse, and shipping/receiving areas of the cabinet and millwork facility. It applies to all operators, material handlers, maintenance personnel, and supervisors who operate, inspect, or maintain this equipment. This checklist must be completed at the start of every shift before any pallet jack is put into service.

3.0 Hazard Identification & Mandatory PPE

- Crush and pinch points: Between pallet jack forks and racking, between load and operator, and at the hydraulic lift mechanism.
- Struck-by hazards: From falling loads or unstable pallets during transport.
- Slip, trip, and fall hazards: From hydraulic fluid leaks, debris on floor, or uneven surfaces.
- Electrical hazards: From damaged battery cables, exposed wires, or improper charging of electric pallet jacks.
- Ergonomic strain: From repetitive pushing/pulling of manual jacks or improper lifting technique.
- CSA-Approved Steel Toed Boots with slip-resistant soles
- High-Visibility Safety Vest (Class 2 or higher)
- Safety Glasses with side shields
- Cut-Resistant Gloves (ANSI A4 or higher) for handling loads
- Hearing Protection (if operating in areas above 85 dBA)

4.0 Required Safety Equipment & Tools

- Daily Safety Checklist form (paper or digital via SafeDesk)
- Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) kit with personal lock and hasp (for electric pallet jack maintenance)
- Hydraulic fluid leak detection kit (absorbent pads, gloves, disposal bag)
- Battery charging station inspection checklist (for electric units)
- Flashlight or inspection light for undercarriage and wheel checks
- Tape measure or gauge for fork height and alignment verification
- Warning tags and barrier tape for marking defective equipment

5.0 Step-by-Step Safety Procedure

1. Verify that the work area is clear of debris, spills, and obstructions. Ensure adequate lighting and that the floor is dry and level. Confirm that no other personnel are in the immediate path of the pallet jack.
2. Perform a visual inspection of the pallet jack frame, forks, and hydraulic unit. Check for cracks, bends, corrosion, or any structural damage. For electric units, inspect the battery compartment for corrosion, loose connections, or damaged cables.
3. Inspect all wheels and rollers for wear, cracks, or debris buildup. Ensure that the load wheels and steer wheels rotate freely and are not worn beyond manufacturer specifications. Replace any damaged wheels immediately.
4. Test the hydraulic system by raising and lowering the forks through a full cycle with no load. Listen for unusual noises, check for smooth operation, and inspect for any hydraulic fluid leaks. If leaks are found, tag the unit out of service and report to maintenance.
5. For electric pallet jacks, verify that the battery is fully charged and that the charging cable is undamaged. Test the emergency stop button, horn, and all directional controls (forward, reverse, lift, lower). Ensure the unit stops immediately when the deadman switch is released.
6. Check the condition of the load platform and fork tips. Ensure that the fork tips are not bent or cracked and that the load backrest (if equipped) is secure. Verify that the fork width is properly adjusted for the pallet size.
7. Inspect the control handle (manual) or tiller arm (electric) for cracks, loose grips, or damaged wiring. Ensure that the handle returns to the neutral position when released. For manual jacks, test the hydraulic release valve by pulling the handle and observing fork descent.
8. Verify that all safety decals and warning labels are present and legible. If any decals are missing or damaged, replace them before operation. Ensure the load capacity rating plate is visible and matches the unit.
9. Complete the Daily Safety Checklist form, documenting all inspection points, any defects found, and corrective actions taken. If any critical defect is identified, attach a lockout/tagout device and remove the unit from service immediately. Notify the supervisor and maintenance team.
10. After passing inspection, perform a loaded test with a known safe load (not exceeding 50% of rated capacity) in a clear area. Test steering, braking, and load stability. If the unit handles correctly, it is cleared for operation. If any issue arises, tag out and report.