

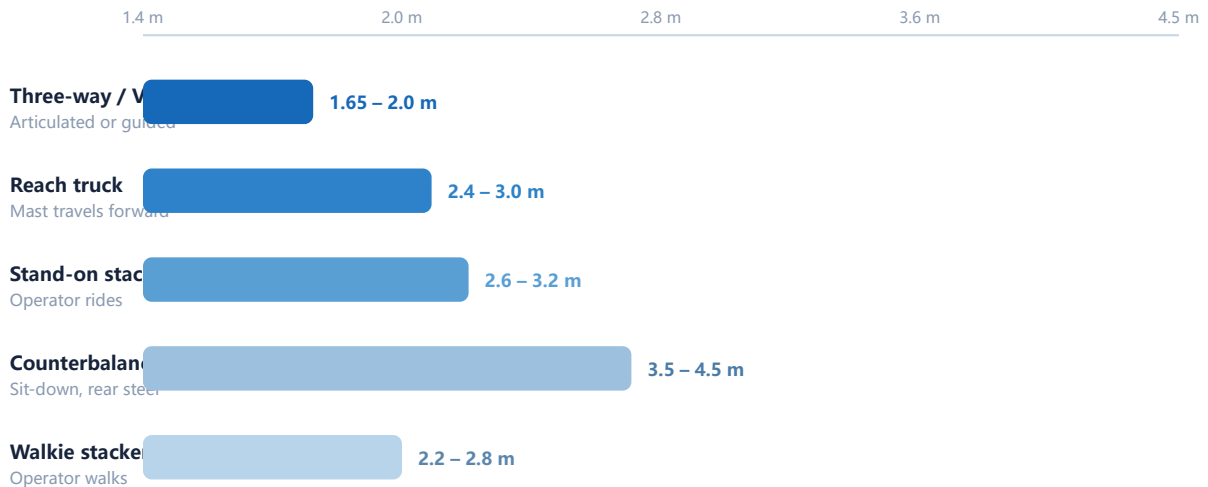
WHITEPAPER

Export Documentation Checklist

Core documents, certificates of origin, and where shipments actually fail

Aisle Width: Truck Type Comparison

Minimum aisle width for each truck type at 3-tier racking



How to use this

Measure the aisle you actually have, then work upwards. Narrowing the aisle raises storage density but limits truck choice. Add clearance for racking protrusion, floor condition and operator tolerance — typically 100–200 mm on top of the figures above.

Export Documentation Checklist

Export Documentation Checklist for Forklift Shipments

1. Why paperwork stops shipments

A forklift can be built, tested, packed and loaded, and still sit at the port because one document is missing or inconsistent. Documentation problems are rarely about complexity; they are almost always about a detail that no one checked, or a mismatch between two documents that were prepared by different people.

This checklist is written for importers, distributors and procurement teams buying forklifts from China, and for exporters preparing shipments.

It is general guidance. Requirements vary by destination country, by product, and by the terms of sale. Always confirm against your own customs broker's requirements before shipping.

2. The core document set

Document	Purpose	Who issues it
Commercial invoice	Declares value and terms	Seller
Packing list	Describes contents, weights, dimensions	Seller
Bill of lading (B/L)	Contract of carriage, title document	Shipping line
Certificate of origin	Confirms country of origin, may reduce duty	Chamber of commerce or authorised body
Sales contract or proforma invoice	Basis of the transaction	Both parties
Insurance certificate	Required under CIF terms	Insurer

These six are present in nearly every shipment. The rest depend on the destination and the product.

3. Certificates of origin and preference

Which certificate applies depends on where the goods are going.

Document	Applies to	Benefit
General CO	Any destination	Confirms origin; no duty preference
Form A	GSP beneficiary countries	Reduced or zero duty where GSP still applies
Form E	ASEAN countries	ACFTA preferential tariff
Form B	Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement members	APTA preferential tariff
Form F	Chile	China-Chile FTA
Form R	Australia	ChAFTA
Form P	Pakistan	China-Pakistan FTA
Other FTA forms	Respective partners	Depends on the agreement
RCEP certificate	RCEP member countries	Regional accumulation rules

The critical point: preference is not automatic. The certificate must be issued before shipment in most cases, the goods must meet the origin rules, and the form must match the shipment exactly. A backdated certificate is often rejected.

Ask your supplier which certificate your destination qualifies for, and confirm with your broker. Two shipments to the same country can qualify differently depending on the specific goods.

4. Product compliance documents

Forklifts carry equipment-specific documents that have nothing to do with customs value but everything to do with clearing the goods.

Document	Relevance
CE Declaration of Conformity (DoC)	Required for EU placement on the market
Technical file summary	Supporting document for CE
Type examination certificates	Evidence of type testing
Special Equipment Manufacturing Licence	Chinese production licence; often requested
ISO 9001 certificate	Quality system evidence; increasingly asked for
Test report	Load test, function test, or specific customer requirement
Battery documentation	UN 38.3 test summary for lithium cells and packs
MSDS / SDS	For the battery and any fluids
Fumigation certificate or heat treatment (ISPM 15)	For solid wood packing; not required for plywood

Two items cause most of the delays:

UN 38.3. Lithium batteries require a UN 38.3 test summary for transport. If the truck ships with a lithium battery, this document is needed. Confirm it is available before booking, not after.

ISPM 15. Solid wood packing must be heat treated or fumigated and marked. Plywood cases are exempt because they are processed wood. If your supplier uses solid wood, confirm the marking.

5. Terms of sale and what they change

Term	Seller arranges	Buyer arranges	Note
EXW	Nothing beyond the factory	Everything	Highest risk and workload for buyer

Term	Seller arranges	Buyer arranges	Note
FCA	Delivery to carrier	Main carriage	Often more suitable than EXW
FOB	Delivery on board at port of loading	Freight, insurance	Most common for container shipments
CFR	Plus freight to destination port	Insurance	
CIF	Plus freight and insurance	Import clearance	Insurance minimum is normally 110 percent of invoice value
DAP	Delivery at named place	Import duty and clearance	
DDP	Everything including duty	Nothing	Seller needs to be able to clear in the destination country

The term determines who prepares which document. Under EXW the buyer may have no practical way to obtain a certificate of origin from the seller's country, which is a common and avoidable problem.

6. Consistency: where shipments actually fail

Customs systems compare documents against each other. The failures below are the ones that repeatedly stop shipments.

Field	Must match across
Consignee name and address	Invoice, packing list, B/L
Description of goods	Invoice, packing list, B/L, certificate of origin
Quantity and unit	Invoice, packing list, B/L
Gross and net weight	Invoice, packing list, B/L

Field	Must match across
Number of packages	Invoice, packing list, B/L
Marks and numbers	Packing list, B/L, physical marking on the case
Value and currency	Invoice, contract, insurance
Port of loading and discharge	B/L, invoice
Model designation	Invoice, packing list, certificate, nameplate on the machine

Three specific traps:

Describing the goods differently on different documents. "Forklift" on one and "electric pallet truck" on another invites a query. Pick one description and use it everywhere, including the certificate of origin.

Rounding weights. A discrepancy of a few kilograms between the packing list and the B/L can trigger an inspection. Use the same measured figures.

Model designation differences. If the machine is marked CPD20 on the nameplate, the invoice should not say something else. Customs has been known to open the container and check.

7. Lithium batteries: the extra requirements

A truck with a lithium battery is not just a truck for transport purposes.

UN 38.3 test summary — required for the cell and the pack

Class 9 dangerous goods — may apply depending on the configuration and whether the battery is installed or shipped separately

State of charge — lithium cells are normally shipped at around 30 percent charge, not full

Labelling — battery marking and any required transport labels

Documentation in the vehicle — some destinations require the battery documentation to travel with the machine

Confirm the shipping configuration early. A battery shipped loose inside the container is treated differently from a battery installed in the truck.

8. A practical checklist

Before production

- ☐ Confirm destination country and applicable certificate of origin
- ☐ Confirm the term of sale and who arranges what
- ☐ Confirm battery type and whether UN 38.3 documentation is available
- ☐ Confirm packing method and ISPM 15 position
- ☐ Confirm model designation as it will appear on the nameplate

Before shipment

- ☐ Commercial invoice, checked
- ☐ Packing list, checked against actual
- ☐ Certificate of origin applied for and issued
- ☐ CE DoC and technical file, if EU
- ☐ UN 38.3 summary, if lithium
- ☐ Insurance arranged, if CIF
- ☐ Case markings agreed and applied
- ☐ Photographs of packing and loading taken
- ☐ All documents checked against each other for consistency

After shipment

- ☐ B/L draft checked and confirmed before the original is issued
 - ☐ Full document set sent by courier, tracked
 - ☐ Electronic copies sent in advance to the broker
 - ☐ Any amendment requested before the vessel arrives
-

9. Common mistakes

Leaving the certificate of origin until after shipment. Many preference certificates must be issued before or at the time of shipment.

Assuming the freight forwarder handles everything. They handle transport. Origin and compliance documents are usually the seller's responsibility.

Not checking documents against each other. The most common cause of delay.

Discovering the UN 38.3 requirement at the port. It cannot be produced retroactively.

Using a different product description on each document. Keep it consistent.

Shipping against a proforma invoice without a contract. Workable, but agree the terms in writing.

Not keeping copies. Customs queries can arrive months later, and the documents need to be retrievable.

10. Summary

Export documentation succeeds or fails on three things:

1. **Getting the right certificate for the destination** — confirmed before production, not before shipment.
2. **Completing the product compliance set** — CE, type test, UN 38.3 and packing marks, depending on the goods.
3. **Consistency across every document** — the same description, the same weights, the same model designation, everywhere.

None of these is difficult. All of them are easy to postpone, and postponing any one of them is what stops a shipment.

This checklist is published by WR Forklift (Taizhou Worui Warehousing and Logistics Equipment Co., Ltd.) as general guidance on export documentation for forklift shipments. Requirements differ by destination and change over time; confirm the applicable requirements with your customs broker and your supplier before each shipment. This document is not legal or customs advice.

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