



Drum Handling

Purpose of Document

To highlight some of the recent innovations in drum handling equipment and how it can assist in complying with The Manual Handling Regulations. It is not intended as a comprehensive guide and further investigation should be undertaken to ensure that all legal obligations are fulfilled.

The Manual Handling Regulations

205 litre drums typically weigh in excess of 250kgs when full. Any manual handling task that requires in excess of 25kgs input force is likely to contravene these regulations. Moving these drums without mechanical assistance is therefore unwise.

In addition to lifting and carrying, the regulations apply equally to loads being pushed or pulled i.e. drum trucks and other manually propelled devices. Regular maintenance and inspection of the equipment to ensure that wheels and castors are free moving is therefore critical.

Solutions

Fork lift attachments can provide safe and efficient solutions providing they are correctly specified. Low cost belly grab units may be suitable for steel drums whilst rim grip units are available for both steel and plastic drums.

De-palletising drums of any design without a fork truck can be carried out safely by using either a straddle or corner de-palletiser. Straddle units allow drums to be removed from anywhere on the pallet, even when it's against a wall. A major advantage if space is at a premium.

Transporting drums was traditionally undertaken with a 2 wheeled trolley requiring the drum to be pulled backwards. This requires excessive force but models are now available that require less than 20kgs of input. Alternatively, drum dollies may suffice but their small castors need excellent surfaces to operate well.

Decanting the contents can be undertaken with drum rotators fitted to fork lifts or specially designed pedestrian stackers. If an overhead hoist is available, a suspended rotator may be used. If space is limited and only small drums are used, compact units are available.

Dispensing small quantities over a long period may best be handled by cradles which can be turned safely.

Turning drums ready for lifting and storing horizontally may now be undertaken with simple cradles which can be used with little effort.

ATEX compliant equipment often using air hydraulic systems is available for use in hazardous areas.

Clean room requirements can be catered for with stainless steel units.

Conclusion

Careful product selection and regular maintenance is likely to reduce lifetime cost, improve efficiency and assist with legal compliance. We offer free independent advice and we will of course be pleased to discuss any of the issues raised, or you can visit our website at www.hallmark-direct.co.uk

©Hallmark Materials Handling 2006

