



**Australian Forklift
and Industrial Truck
Association**

FLOOD DAMAGED FORKLIFT TRUCKS

Following the Brisbane floods in 2011 the Australian Forklift and Industrial Truck Association (AFITA) became aware of issues with the sale of flood damaged forklifts (insurance write-offs). Although these machines were sold for on the basis of being for spare parts only, there were instances of them being repaired and offered for sale as second-hand working forklifts or put into the hire market instead of being dismantled and used as spare parts.

Recent major floods in Queensland and NSW again raise the risk of this happening.

It should be noted that under Workplace Health and Safety legislation, buyers must be made aware of the history and maintenance of forklifts being offered for sale.

Refurbishing of flood damaged forklifts (insurance write-offs) is not recommended because these forklifts are beyond economic repair. Further, the longevity of components which were significantly corroded and water affected may impair the safety features of the forklift. In addition, there are concerns with the toxicity of the water in which such forklifts have been submerged.

Unless the forklifts are inspected and properly stripped down and refurbished - including replacing wiring harnesses, controllers, motors etc. – there is a significant risk that these machines will not be in a proper working condition to ensure they are safe in accordance with Australian Standards and Workplace Health and Safety legislation.

In addition, forklifts (insurance write-offs) will be marked by manufacturers or their authorised representatives as scrapped and inactive on the service systems. As such, they will be ignored should there be product improvements or service campaigns – ie. these trucks will not be subject to these campaigns as the records will show they have been disposed of due to flood damage. This may result in a lack of insurance cover for these machines.

Some manufacturers take the step of removing compliance plates from written off machines under their control ensuring that they must be re-certified by the manufacturer before being placed back into service. However older privately-owned and grey import machines are unlikely to have this step taken, and therefore could be sold for use.

If you are purchasing a second-hand forklift or renting one, you should carefully check the history of the truck you are considering and also ensure that it comes with the manufacturer's instruction manual and service records. This is a requirement of Workplace Health and Safety legislation.

March 2022