Anywhere there is a pallet, you can bet a pallet jack was used to move it. Almost all warehouses, manufacturers and big-box stores use pallet jacks. For about $500, a company can purchase a good-quality pallet jack. These jacks can lift 5,000 pounds or more easily. However – is 5,000 pounds a safe load to move? Does this load affect shoulders, wrists and the back? Take a look at the following safety tips for using pallet jacks safely:

**WORKSAFE TIPS**

**PALLET JACK SAFETY CONCERNS**
- Load dropped on foot.
- Strain or dislocation of shoulder due to forceful pulling of a pallet jack.
- Strains from moving a loaded pallet jack.
- Trips from exposed pallet jack “forks.”

**PALLET JACK TRAINING**
- Know the load capacity.
- Know the following handle positions:
  - Raise position
  - Neutral position
  - Lower position
- Be familiar with ramps, narrow aisles or floor obstructions that could cause an incident.
- Clean up wet floors – could cause a slip and fall while pushing a pallet jack.

**HANDLING WOODEN PALLETS**
- Wooden pallets can weigh 30-40 lbs.
- Always wear gloves when handling pallets.
- Never stand on pallets or use as a work platform.
- Never stand a pallet on end.
- When a pallet is emptied, remove it immediately.
- An empty or unloaded pallet is a trip hazard.
- Do not stage pallets at the end of aisles or around corners – avoid creating a trip hazard.
- Store stacks or excess pallets outside – they are a fire hazard.
- Tarp or protect pallets stored outdoors from water, as water-soaked pallets can weigh 50 or more pounds.

**BEST PRACTICES**
- Report damaged or worn pallet jacks.
- Report pallet jacks that have flat spots in wheels or that will not roll well.
- Report pallet jacks with a failing hydraulic unit.
- Never overload the pallet jack load capacity.
- Only PUSH pallet jacks.
- NEVER PULL pallet jacks–places major strain on shoulders – rotator cuff injury could result!
- Start the pallet jack slowly – no shoving.
- Never yank or throw the pallet jack handle.
- NEVER ride a pallet jack for fun.
- Never stand on a pallet jack.
- Unused pallet jacks are a major trip hazard.
- When not in use, pallet jacks must be rolled into an area that does not have pedestrian traffic.
  - Under a shelf or pallet rack
  - In a pallet or under a table
- Keep your heels safe! Move the jack slowly!
- Do not brace or stop a pallet jack with the foot!
- When moving a pallet jack & load, keep the jack control handle in the “neutral” position.
- Keep your feet out from beneath the load.
- Lower load before working around a pallet jack.
- Never leave a pallet jack with the load elevated.
- Keep the pallet jack in front of you when descending a ramp.
- Wear gloves when handling pallets.
- When a pallet jack is stuck in a pallet, push down on the handle until the front fork wheels come up slightly, and then pull the jack out of the pallet.
- Stack the pallet load so it will not shift or turn over – the handle can “whip” when the jack turns over – resulting in injury.
These advisory materials have been developed from national standards and sources believed to be reliable, however, no guarantee is made as to the sufficiency of the information contained in the material and Missouri Employers Mutual Insurance Company assumes no liability for its use. Advice about specific situations should be obtained from a safety professional.