



HYSTER® TRUCKS FOR SPECIAL CONTAINERS

Since 2001, ELA Container GmbH in Haren an der Ems, Germany, has relied on Hyster® forklifts. What began with the purchase of a heavy-duty truck for an intralogistics operation is now a fleet of 65 vehicles with 21 variants. Using these trucks, ELA, which is a specialist for mobile space solutions, covers a wide variety of tasks in its depots worldwide.

In 2022, ELA celebrated its 50th anniversary. The company started out converting sea containers, primarily for use as secure tool storage on

construction sites. Today, with 1,200 employees at 20 locations, the company develops individual rooms and entire buildings using containers in the desired size, fully equipped, as a rental or purchase solution.

In most cases, the containers that ELA supplies are intended as a temporary solution. The containers are often used multiple times. For example, as a classroom, then as a store room, office, or even a doctor's practice. The possibilities are almost unlimited.



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// HYSTER® TRUCKS ARE USED FOR VARIED APPLICATIONS

Trucks with cranes typically set down the individually equipped containers where they are needed. Then, when the containers return to ELA, they are reconditioned for the next use.

In the reconditioning process, Hyster industrial trucks efficiently handle the container and other materials. In fact, Hyster trucks are being used for various tasks at all ELA locations worldwide.

Transporting containers and accessories between the outdoor area and the hall is the job of Hyster big trucks - diesel-powered H16XD-6 and H16XM-6 heavy-duty forklifts. Equipped with special spreaders, they grip the containers. Other large loads such as staircases, platforms, or the underlay on which the containers stand at the site of operation, can also rest securely on the Hyster lift trucks' forks.

At ELA, the containers pass through various stations. First they go to the cleaning station, then to the furnishings station or assembly station. For example, if walls have to be moved or windows enlarged for the next job. At the end is the hygiene and electrical testing station.

// A SECURE GRIP ON LOADS THANKS TO CAN BUS

“Even a normal sea container has to be handled with great care, depending on the load,” says Holger Schwenen, fleet manager at ELA. “With our special containers, accuracy is even more important, from truck loading to transport on the company premises.”

Right at the beginning of the customer relationship, Hyster supplied a truck with a spreader that can grip the container corners perfectly. This allows

the heavy-duty forklifts to pick up containers from 5,015 to 10,000 mm wide and 2,500 to 3,000 mm deep. Cameras and sensors help with the exact positioning of the grippers. This saves time. In addition, the forklift operator can immediately see whether the container is correctly “locked”, i.e. securely connected to the spreader.

In the newer generation trucks, a CAN bus system processes the data from the cameras and sensors. This makes it possible to precisely grip and transport the containers without damaging the side walls, where supply lines for water and electricity are installed.

In addition, special protective plastic panels prevent the sensitive surfaces on the top and bottom of the container from being scratched.





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// OPTIMAL OPERATION - INSIDE AND OUT

Both the preparation and production of new containers takes place indoors at ELA. Industrial trucks bring material such as frames, floors, walls, or other components from indoor and outdoor warehouses.

For transporting smaller materials, the Hyster S1.6S pedestrian stackers come into play. For loads above 1.6 tonnes, the compact, manoeuvrable J series electric lift trucks (J3.0XN or J5.5XN) may take over, alongside others. Electric or IC-powered trucks are selected depending on the application.

“Electric lift trucks are optimal when the driver rarely changes,” says Holger Schwenen, explaining his concept. “For operations with frequent interruptions, the IC lift trucks currently perform better.”

The forklifts, stackers, and heavy-duty lift trucks distributed across all sites form a fleet of 65 vehicles, of which the oldest have been in use for more than 20 years. Together, the fleet covers a total area of 650,000 m² and achieves an annual mileage of up to 1,500 operating hours.

The H16XD-6 heavy-duty lift trucks consume up to 20 percent less fuel than their predecessors. On average, these heavy-duty forklifts are in operation for eight hours a day, while a forklift working indoors operates for five to eight hours.





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// A FUTURE WITH HYSTER

“At present, we obtain all our forklifts from Hyster,” explains Holger Schwenen, for whom, for example, the quiet running of the equipment is a key factor. “The drivers are not jolted, but can calmly drive their routes.”

This is important to him because many employees spend the majority of their working time on the forklift. In addition to comfort and ease of operation, safety is another crucial factor.

“There is excellent all-round visibility on Hyster equipment,” he says. “That plays a key role in preventing accidents.”

On an operational level, vehicle reliability is among the top criteria. “Nobody can afford long periods of downtime because a spare part is missing for repairs anymore,” Schwenen says, in the same breath praising the service provided by Hyster dealer Agravis. “Whether it’s a repair or an order, we can rely on prompt processing.”

This was the case with the recent purchase of five Hyster H3.0A and five H16XD6 forklifts, all destined for various depots. ELA is currently expanding its site in Frankenberg. Joint growth between Hyster and ELA continues.

