

7 WARNING SIGNS **YOUR FORKLIFT HAS A HYDRAULIC PROBLEM**

Hydraulic systems rarely fail without warning. These are the seven symptoms to recognize – what they look like, what they likely mean, and how urgent each one is. Look for these small problems before they become a job-stopper. Use this quick guide to spot problems early and know when to act.

	Warnign Sign	What you'll notice	Most Likely Cause	Action
1	Mast Drift / Load Creep	The forks slowly lower on their own when a load is raised and the operator's hand is off the control.	Worn lift cylinder seals or a leaking control valve allowing pressure to bleed off.	Remove from service immediately.
2	Slow Lift Speed	The forklift takes longer than normal to raise a full load.	Low hydraulic fluid, clogged filter, worn pump, or incorrect relief valve pressure.	Schedule service soon.
3	Jerky or Uneven Tilt	The mast tilts unevenly, hesitates, surges, or shudders during operation.	Air in the hydraulic system, worn tilt cylinder seals, or contaminated fluid.	Schedule service soon.
4	Visible Fluid Leak	Wet cylinder rods, oil on mast components, fluid under the forklift, or leaking hoses/fittings.	Failed rod or wiper seals, cracked hydraulic hose, chafed line, or loose fitting.	Remove from service immediately.
5	Overheating Hydraulic Fluid	Fluid looks dark or milky, the reservoir feels unusually hot, or there's a burnt-oil smell.	Contaminated fluid, clogged return filter, internal pump bypass, or heavy-cycle operation with poor fluid flow.	Stop the machine. Check fluid and filter immediately.
6	Noisy Hydraulic Pump	Whining, grinding, or chattering when the lift is operated — especially when cold or under load.	Low fluid, clogged suction strainer, suction-side air leak, or pump wear.	Check fluid level and suction strainer immediately.
7	Weak or Sluggish Steering	The steering wheel feels heavy, slow, inconsistent, or difficult during tight turns.	Low system pressure, worn pump, steering cylinder seal failure, or low hydraulic fluid.	Schedule service. This affects safe operation.



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