Loading Docks & Warehouses

There is more to safety on shipping and receiving docks of plants and warehouses than is evident.

Powered industrial trucks are being used more widely today. Two of the more serious accidents involving powered industrial trucks are backing the truck off the edge of the dock or turning a corner too fast with the wheels too close to the edge, which causes it to fall over.

Many injuries are caused by improper and irregular stacking of materials. This includes failure to "tie in" and piling stock too high. Unstable stacks can fall over. Also, avoid stacking materials too close to sprinkler systems.

When using hand or powered industrial trucks to load freight cars or tractor trailers, be sure to use a bridge plate and make sure it is secured. Always check it out. In addition, check the flooring in the vehicle you are loading.

When working with trailers, check to see that the driver has chocked the wheels, so that the trailer does not move away from the dock when you enter it.

Knowing how to work on the dock is important – don't speed; watch out for other trucks and workers; and look for boxes, cartons, carboys, drums, crates or skids that are not in their proper places. Also, pipe, tubing, large spools, rolls and irregularly shaped items are dangerous because they might extend into aisles.

Follow established traffic lines and storage boundary lines. Stay alert at intersections, crosswalks and other potential danger zones.

Be especially alert for overhead hazards, like pipes, structural members, lights, door casings, or high cable wires and signs.

Always be sure there is adequate lighting. Pay attention to all signs, flashers, speed limits, rules of operation and regulations.

Know where fire extinguishers are located and what type of extinguisher to use on different types of fires. Know where the fire alarm boxes are and keep access to them clear at all times. Check to see that all automatic fire doors are working properly and that their operation is not impeded or blocked in any manner. Follow rules regarding the handling and storage of flammables on the dock or in the warehouse. Pay attention to the U.S. Department of Transportation's official warning signs and symbols on containers.

Dock safety, in most cases, includes personal lifting. Know the proper way to lift – make sure to do it safely.

- Know your limitations.
- Examine the load for protruding nails, screws, splinters and metal straps that could cause cuts or punctures.
- Locate the center of gravity to get good balance.
- Bend at the knees.
- Keep your back straight, but not necessarily vertical.
- Don’t twist your body when lifting.
- Don’t jerk the load--lift gradually.
Our safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are made solely to assist your organization in reducing hazards and the potential of hazards and accidents. These recommendations were developed from conditions observed and information provided at the time of our visit. They do not attempt to identify every possible loss potential, hazard or risk, nor do they guarantee that workplace accidents will be prevented. These safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are not a substitute for ongoing, well-researched internal safety and risk management programs. This report does not warrant that the property inspected and its operations are compliant with any law, rule or regulation.

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