



A loading dock is one of the busiest areas of a warehouse. Due to heavy traffic, the potential for accidents and injuries is greater, making safe practices critically important. Team members need to be mindful about what they are doing and have an awareness of those around them, especially when forklifts and other forms of material handling equipment are present.

For working levels more than 30 inches above the ground level or working area, fall protection devices such as guardrails, safety nets or personal fall protection systems are recommended. Use visual barriers with bright colors to call attention to working levels lower than 30 inches.

Forklifts

- Ensure forklift operators are properly certified
- Forklifts should be inspected regularly and in good working condition prior to use
- Listen for forklift horns
- Do not ride on the forks or distract the operator
- Load heights should not interfere with operator sight lines

Awareness

- Be alert to other vehicles, workers and materials
- Pay attention to materials on the dock that could fall
- Be attentive to your surroundings
- Never horseplay around loading docks

Trucks and Trailers

- Ensure there is adequate lighting inside trailers
- Slide, don't drop, dock plates into position
- Keep dock plates in place
- Check the load capacity to ensure it can handle the load
- Make sure drivers turn off their motors to prevent carbon monoxide exposure
- Restrain the truck and trailer by using restraining devices and wheel chocks, preventing trailer creep

Slips, Trips, and Fall Hazards

- Keep floors clean, dry and in good condition
- Look out for oily or wet surfaces
- Clean up any spills immediately
- Secure and mark dock edges
- Don't jump onto or off a loading dock
- Stay away from loading dock edges
- Wear sturdy, non-skid shoes that support the foot and ankle

Proper Loading and Unloading

- Use dollies, forklifts and other lifting aids rather than lifting when possible
- When lifting, use leg strength by bending knees and keeping back posture straight
- Wear well-fitting gloves that provide adequate grip when lifting, loading and unloading
- Load hand trucks with heavy objects on the bottom and weight forward over the axle

The advice presented in this document is intended as general information for employers. For further information, please contact your loss control consultant.

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