



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Safety with Pallets

We utilize pallets in this facility each and every day. From shipping product out the door to moving items internally, pallets are part of our daily life.

Pallets are a fundamental part of warehouse and industrial life. They're immensely helpful in allowing workers to move loads around in a safe and quick manner. Their use is so ubiquitous though that we often forget just how hazardous they can be when misused.

Webster defines a pallet as a "support for freight." As a support, it has the potential to take a lot of abuse. A lot of old pallets are never discarded when they should be. They are stacked in a corner and not used except as a last resort when there are no good ones left.

Too many times we hear that a pallet has broken and the freight has fallen to the floor. This not only causes freight damage but can also result in equipment damage--or worse yet, in employee injury or death.

Please take a moment to review the following safety tips for working around palletized loads:

Wood Pallet Safety Tips:

- Before using a pallet, inspect its condition to make sure it can be safely stored with a heavy load.
- If the pallet has any cracked or broken pieces, DON'T USE IT!!
- Make sure the stringer is in good condition. Damaged stringers should be properly repaired with plugs or mending tape to ensure pallet safety.
- Check the pallet for any protruding nails or splinters of wood.
- If a pallet does not meet these safety conditions, the pallet must be immediately taken out of use until it is repaired or replaced.
- It is important to clean wood pallets regularly, especially when dealing with food.

Pallet Safety Tips when Loading:

- Make sure the size of the pallets you are loading are compatible with the safety standards of your material handling equipment.
- A pallet's load capacities must not be exceeded, especially when loading and unloading.
- Check your material handling equipment for its load capacity and loading specifications.
- You must not exceed the load capacity of your material handling equipment.

- Be aware that as the load center of a pallet increases, the lifting capacity of the handling equipment decreases.

Safe Pallet Use and Handling:

- Gloves are required when handling wood pallets.
- The safest way to move a pallet is to stand it on its edge and slide it across the floor. Be sure to never leave or store a pallet on its side or on its end. Pallets stored this way can fall and cause injury.
- Never throw a pallet for any reason.
- Never walk on top of pallets.
- Be sure to separate any unsafe pallets from those ready for use.
- Avoid manually stacking high numbers of pallets. Use a forklift or other handling equipment to stack pallets higher than 8 feet.

Remember:

Thinking ahead can save a lot of trouble. It is a waste of production time and effort to reload a pallet that has fallen. But, more importantly, an effective pallet/warehouse safety plan can prevent injuries and save lives!

“Safety doesn't slow the job down but mishaps do.”

