



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Loading Dock Safety

Loading docks are hubs of activity in manufacturing plants, warehouses, industrial buildings, and distribution centers. In most companies, this is the primary location of movement of product in and out of a facility.

A loading dock is a recessed bay in a facility where trucks are loaded and unloaded. Loading docks may be exterior, flush with the building envelope, or fully enclosed.

Part of a facility's service or utility infrastructure, loading docks typically provide direct access to staging areas, storage rooms, and freight elevators.

When looking at the different operations taking place in a warehouse, distribution center, or other loading/unloading operations, loading dock environments can be one of the more hazardous areas.

Because no two facilities are exactly the same, no across-the-board solution for loading dock safety exists.

While a loading dock is an important utility infrastructure commonly found in commercial and industrial buildings, it can be a potentially dangerous place for anyone that works on or around the area.

Loading Dock Hazards:

The loading dock area must be inspected regularly to identify potential hazards that may include:

- Slips, trips, and falls caused by floor conditions, poor housekeeping, or dock edge;
- Forklifts overturning;
- Pedestrian and powered truck collision;
- Trailer creep, which can cause a gap between the trailer and dock;
- Moving unsecured loads;
- Struck by and being crushed by an object or load;
- Back injuries from improper lifting or carrying;
- Inadequate lighting, especially in the trailer; and
- Carbon monoxide exposure from truck and powered material-handling equipment.

Helping to Make Your Dock Safe:

With so many moving pieces potentially in play, ensuring loading dock safety in the workplace can be a challenge.

- Make sure all personnel are trained in dock safety and that rules are enforced.
- Ensure that locking devices are used on every vehicle at a dock.

- Protect pedestrians by ensuring they are aware of powered industrial trucks in use. Pedestrians must be mindful, cautious, and realize that powered trucks may, improperly, neglect to yield to them.
- Mark floors with yellow tape or paint to identify walkway barriers, doorways, parking aisles, and overhead obstacles.
- Protect people traveling through your facility from sharp corners and from falling off dock edges. Place padding or guards around sharp corners and dock barricades on open dock edges.
- Put an inspection program in place to review palletized materials. If pallets are defective, the product should be moved to a safe pallet.
- Review warehouse ergonomics. Adjust the height of conveyors to eliminate lower back stress. Place heavier products at knee- to chest-high levels. Limit the amount of weight a worker must carry and allow for assisted lifting from other workers.
- Install guards on conveyor sprockets, gears, and rollers. All pinch points must be protected and labeled.
- Use plastic or metal banding to secure product to pallets for transportation or storage.
- Shrink-wrap loose product for transport or storage. It is very important to secure small items that might fall through the overhead guard of a lift truck.
- Clean out dock areas periodically to remove accumulated debris.
- Only allow documented OSHA-trained and authorized employees to operate powered hand trucks, hand jacks, and forklifts.
- Inspect the dock area daily to ensure that emergency equipment is not blocked or damaged.
- Paint the dock edge a reflective yellow to provide a better view of the dock.
- Ensure proper illumination for exit routes.
- Identify and mark overhead hazards such as pipes, doors, and electric wires.
- Prohibit dock jumping, which can lead to serious ankle, knee, and back injuries.
- Make sure that dock plates and boards are designed for the loads and lift trucks used.
- Always inspect the floors of trailers and trucks before a forklift or pallet jack is driven onto them.
- Always inspect the landing gear and place trailer stabilizing jack stands under trailers that are spotted at a dock.
- Always make sure dock levelers are returned to the stored position after being used below dock. This will eliminate a "void in the floor" and help prevent forklift cross traffic accidents.
- Provide a dock seal or dock shelter to keep rain and snow off loading docks, which can cause slippery surfaces.

Remember:

Evaluating and developing operating procedures to increase general awareness, and providing employee training and enforcement of safety practices, can all improve loading dock safety.

SAFETY RULES ARE YOUR BEST TOOLS!!!

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests

