



# Warehouse

## How Safe is Your Warehouse?

### Safety Committee Basics

#### Why this topic?

Warehouse operations are common with most businesses, and present a wide variety of potential hazards for your employees and vendors. When warehouse losses are reviewed, the most frequent injuries and losses occur in the loading dock area, during forklift operations and employees manually handling material. Warehouse loading docks are common areas where injuries and damage to products occur.

#### Common Dock Hazards

- Product falling onto an employee;
- Clutter and congestion;
- Employees jumping from a higher elevation to a lower elevation;
- Lifting and adjusting dock plates; and
- Forklift or pallet jacks rolling off the dock.



*Use all equipment correctly, be sure the dock plate is secure before moving the load.*

#### Dock Controls Include

- Securing dock plates so they don't roll over;
- Conducting daily inspections of loads and storage arrangements;
- Never allow a forklift to back to the edge of the dock;
- Enforcing safety rules about employee movement from higher dock elevations to the lower ground surface; and
- Monitoring assigned safety inspection forms

#### Common Forklift Hazards

Warehouse employees will use forklifts and pallet jacks routinely throughout the day. Common hazards include:

- Obstructed view;
- Speeding;
- Moisture on the working surface (ice, water, oil);
- Blind corners;
- Insufficient lighting;
- Traffic patterns;
- Temporary storage areas inside and outside;
- Lack of proper maintenance and self-inspections; and
- Operator's mind is not on the task at hand.

#### Forklift Controls Include

- Monitoring operators' speed and use of horns when approaching intersections and while backing up;
- Never allowing anyone other than the operator to ride on the equipment;
- Not allowing operators to ride on forks while lifting or trying to retrieve products vertically;
- Marking all high-hazard areas with signage;
- Installing convex mirrors to allow pedestrians and operators to see around obstructed intersections; and
- Frequent safety talks with your employees who work with or around this equipment.



*A forklift operator must be trained to drive the forklift. If he is unable to see, he should rearrange the load so vision is not a problem.*

## Common Manual Hazards

Even though forklifts, pallet jacks, and other mechanical lifting devices are made available, employees will occasionally be required to manually move product. Common hazards:

- Neck and shoulder strains and low back injuries;
- Foot and ankle injuries;
- Slips and falls;
- Injuries caused by being struck with an object; and
- Strains due to reaching into low areas.



### SIX STEPS TO PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES

1. Create a solid base of support
2. Bend your knees and hips
3. Hold the object close to the body
4. Engage your abdominals
5. Keep your back straight
6. Lift with your legs



*When manually moving product, remember proper lifting techniques to avoid strains or sprains.*

## Manual Controls Include

- Keeping aisles clear so employees can move material without hitting equipment or personnel;
- Using hand carts and dollies whenever other mechanical equipment cannot be used;
- Providing industrial stairs so employees don't climb shelving or use other make-shift items as stairs;
- Monitoring stacking heights and inspecting the stability of the stacked product;
- Conducting employee safety training on lifting and material handling.

The practice of recognizing hazards in warehouse operations is often overlooked until a serious injury or fatality occurs. By focusing your efforts, your warehouse will be more productive and employees will avoid serious injuries.

## SAFETY TRAINING SIGN-IN SHEET

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Warehouse: How Safe is Your Warehouse?

The following employees participated in this training.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
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