

Transportation Safety

Training ADVISOR

November 2023

Dock and Warehouse Safety

Beware the hazards

FMCSA's carrier safety rating
system may change — again

Ensure workers are
protected before flu season

Questions of the month

Information and resources to help your drivers operate safely



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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Rushed and overworked: Overlooked warehouse safety risks

Some warehouse and dock safety tips are easy to remember: avoid slippery surfaces, use a sturdy ladder when accessing higher shelves, wear personal protective equipment. Some of these guidelines are common sense, and many drivers even follow these rules on instinct.

However, there are a couple of other rules that drivers, trainers, and even managers overlook sometimes: employee labor and timing.

1. Don't overwork your employees

A driver who has been working too hard or for too long is a definite safety risk to themselves and the entire company. Tired workers are at a higher risk for accidents and mistakes, which can be treacherous in a warehouse or dock setting.

Overexertion, or working harder than the body can handle, is another major risk to health and safety. Weakened muscles can result in serious injury when lifting or moving objects and heavy loads, or even when assisting other employees.

Make sure your drivers aren't working too many hours and encourage breaks from difficult tasks.



2. Don't rush your employees

Although encouraging employees to work slower might seem like the opposite of what you should do, there's a lot to be said about the slow and steady approach.

Demanding too much from your drivers in a short amount of time can lead to avoidable accidents and injuries. If your drivers become burned out, they can't do their jobs properly, or for very long.

Set reasonable expectations for your drivers to work at a comfortable pace. This leads to fewer safety risks and more productivity. ♦



Lucero Truszkowski

Lucero Truszkowski joined J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. as an Associate Editor in 2022. Lucero edits, writes, and researches content on a variety of topics, including transportation, human resources, and driver training. She is currently earning a Master of Science (MS) in Professional Writing from New York University.



TRAINING BLUEPRINT — DOCK/WAREHOUSE SAFETY

Beware the hazards

Docks and warehouses are busy and dangerous places. It's important for your drivers to understand the unique hazards of working in these places and how to proceed safely.

Surroundings? What surroundings?

Because of the amounts and types of traffic found at loading docks and warehouses, drivers need to be aware of their surroundings and the various hazards they may find.

- **Floors.** Water, ice, oil, and grease can make floors slippery by reducing traction, which can then result in dangerous slips and falls.
- **Dock approaches and floors.** Debris, potholes, and deteriorating/buckling pavement create dangerous surroundings that can cause slips and falls.
- **Unguarded or unmarked openings.** A typical loading dock is about four feet above the ground, which makes it a major fall hazard, especially in areas with unmarked openings.
- **Pedestrian awareness.** Although forklift operators are trained to yield to pedestrians, pedestrians may not always be visible. Drivers need to take caution when walking around the loading dock. It's safest to walk along the sides of aisles or in walkways marked for pedestrian traffic. Advise drivers to make a habit of checking convex mirrors at blind spots.

TIP: Distribute and discuss any policies your company may have on this issue. Conclude your training with a question and answer session.

At the loading dock

Loading and unloading a trailer is a routine task, but it can still be dangerous!

When loading or unloading a vehicle, the driver should always:

- Set the parking brake,
- Turn off the vehicle,
- Put the keys in their pocket, and
- Chock the wheels.

When exiting the vehicle and walking around the loading dock area (including steps and ramps), a driver must watch for hazards that could cause a slip and/or fall.

Drivers must use caution when working on platforms, scaffolds, or other elevated areas.

When opening the vehicle's doors, the driver should watch for falling freight. Even a load that has only traveled a few miles can shift and become a hazard.

A driver should never spend more time than necessary in a trailer while loading or unloading. The carbon monoxide and other emissions from forklifts used to load and unload can build up and become deadly.

Maintaining communication between the driver and others involved in the loading and unloading process is also important. Everyone should agree upon and use the same hand signals, light systems, and signs. A vehicle should never leave the dock until an "all clear" signal is given.

TIP: Use a training video to introduce this topic to your drivers. Choose videos that focus on the situations your drivers most often find themselves in.

Tools of the trade

The forklift, pallet jack, and two-wheel dolly are tools that may be used at the loading dock to load or unload a vehicle.

Forklift. A forklift, also called a powered industrial truck, is a mechanical device used for moving supplies and materials. It is powered by an electric motor or internal combustion engine.



Drivers must complete an OSHA-mandated training program to operate a forklift.

Pallet jack. A pallet jack is a powered or mechanical lift used for loading or unloading cargo shipped on pallets.

- A **powered pallet jack** is most often used on heavier loads or when the cargo needs to travel a long distance. Drivers must complete an OSHA-mandated training program to operate a powered pallet jack.
- A **hand pallet jack** is most often used for short distances and on low grades.

Two-wheel dolly. A dolly helps people move smaller items that may be difficult to lift due to size or weight. ♦



TRAINING HANDOUT — DOCK/WAREHOUSE SAFETY

Stack your loads like a pro

An improperly stacked load is a hazard to everyone. Errors in stacking can also cause costly and unnecessary cargo damage. Remember these eight key features to help stack your loads like a pro, every time.

1. **Policies.** Understand and follow company policy on where and how to stack loads properly.
2. **Arrangement.** Stack lighter items on top of heavier items.
3. **Size.** Items stacked on a pallet should not stick out past the pallet's sides.
4. **Alignment.** Pallets should be stacked straight and centered on top of each other.
5. **Exceptions.** Keep in mind that some pallets may not be stackable.
6. **Walkways.** Keep aisles and evacuation routes clear.
7. **Safety.** Never stack objects near exit signs, fire extinguishers, or alarm switches.
8. **Spacing.** If you need to stack items near a ceiling, make sure the items are at least 18 inches from the overhead sprinklers. ♦





TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE — DOCK/WAREHOUSE

1. Drivers must use caution when working on:
 - A. Platforms
 - B. Scaffolds
 - C. Elevated areas
 - D. All of the above

2. The forklift, pallet jack, and two-wheel dolly are all tools that you can use at the loading dock to load or unload a vehicle.
 - A. True
 - B. False

3. When loading or unloading a vehicle, you should:
 - A. Leave the keys in the ignition
 - B. Set the parking brake
 - C. Pass the keys to someone else
 - D. Spend a long time in the trailer

4. If you have only traveled a few miles, it means that your load has not shifted around much and you don't need to worry about it.
 - A. True
 - B. False

5. If you need to stack items near a ceiling, make sure the items are at least _____ from the overhead sprinklers.
 - A. 1 foot
 - B. 6 inches
 - C. 18 inches
 - D. 3 feet ♦

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____



FMCSA's carrier safety rating system may change — again

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is taking another run at improving the Safety Fitness Determination (SFD) process for carriers operating in or affecting



interstate commerce. The Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) was published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2023. **Comments must be received on or before October 30, 2023.**

The ANPRM is FMCSA's second attempt to revamp its **safety rating** methodology, the last time being in 2016. FMCSA withdrew that rulemaking in 2017.

ANPRM overview

According to FMCSA, the current SFD process is resource-intensive and reaches a small percentage of the over 750,000 active carriers in the United States, hence FMCSA's efforts to shape a proposed rule that effectively and efficiently targets the right carriers. FMCSA's ANPRM requests public comments on:

- The need for a rulemaking to revise the regulations prescribing the safety rating process;

- The available science or technical information to analyze regulatory alternatives for determining motor carrier safety fitness;
- Feedback on the agency's current safety rating regulations, including the process and impacts; and
- The available data and costs for regulatory alternatives that are likely to be considered.

More specifically, FMCSA requests answers to questions in the following areas:

- The effectiveness of the current three-tier system of Satisfactory, Conditional, or Unsatisfactory;
- Modifications to the current administrative review process, the list of acute and critical violations, and the calculations;
- Whether passenger carrier standards should be higher than those set for property carriers and how;
- The impact of potential SFD changes on states;
- The feasibility of using the Safety Measurement System (SMS) data in the rating of carriers, given that inspection data does not affect the current methodology;
- How driver performance and violation data could be used; and
- Whether a carrier's use of safety technologies should be a factor, and how. ♦

Ensure workers are protected before flu season hits

Seasonal flu is a contagious illness caused by various strains of influenza that affect the respiratory system, mainly the nose, throat, and lungs. Because flu viruses often mutate, it can be difficult to limit the severity and spread of infection.

As flu season approaches, it's important to understand the symptoms, how the virus spreads, and best practices for limiting worker exposure to the viruses. A new OSHA fact sheet (FS-4290) outlines symptoms, transmission, prevention and control, and recommendations for **employers** with workers at increased risk.

Flu spreads from person-to-person via tiny droplets in the air when people cough, sneeze, or talk, or via contaminated surfaces. People infected with the virus are most contagious 3-4 days after developing symptoms, and

depending on the strain, symptoms can be mild or severe. They include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny/stuffy nose
- Headaches
- Body aches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting/diarrhea



Healthcare workers and those who work in crowded environments are at greater risk of exposure to the flu virus.

To reduce the spread of flu in the workplace, OSHA recommends that employers encourage workers to:

- Get a flu vaccine,
- Practice proper handwashing and appropriate coughing and sneezing etiquette, and
- Stay away from others when sick. ♦



Next Month's Topic: Driver Wellness

It's no secret: Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is challenging for drivers. But it's not impossible — it's all about the choices you make on a daily basis. The obesity rate for long-haul drivers has historically been higher than the general adult working populations. So how can you avoid being a statistic?

Expert Help: Questions of the Month

Question: What is the recommended speed for forklifts operating within a manufacturing facility and warehouse?

Answer: Both the federal OSHA forklift regulation and the ASME B56.1 standard for low lift and high lift trucks require that a forklift be driven at a speed that allows you to stop it in a safe manner, as at **1910.178(n)(8)**. However, neither regulation specifies what that speed should be. A “walking speed” is usually between 3-4 miles per hour.

The manufacturer of the equipment may have recommendations on safe operating speeds.



Question: How should warehouse aisles be marked?

Answer: OSHA regulations do not define how aisles should be marked. A common method for marking is by using yellow paint or stripes. OSHA designates yellow as the “caution” color to be used for marking physical hazards such as stumbling, falling, or tripping (**1910.144(a)(3)**).

ANSI Z535.1 Safety Color Code also defines “safety yellow” as the identification of CAUTION. It requires the use of solid yellow, yellow and black stripes, or yellow and black checkers for maximum contrast with the particular background. It also designates combinations of black and yellow as the preferred method for traffic markings. ♦

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