

## **Keys to Loading Dock Safety**

Working on loading docks presents a variety of hazards for employees and poses special safety issues. Workers need to be careful about what they are doing, and they must always be aware of other workers around them—particularly co-workers using forklifts and other forms of material-handling equipment.

### **Safety tips for loading docks:**

#### **1. Be on the Lookout for These Loading Dock Hazards:**

- Slipping or tripping on wet, oily, or broken floor surfaces
- Falling off dock edges
- Injuries from falls or unsecured dock plates
- Injuries resulting from unchocked trailer wheels
- Illness or unconsciousness from inhaling carbon monoxide from trucks
- Back injuries from improper lifting and carrying
- Injuries from careless behavior around forklifts and other vehicles.

#### **2. Keep Floors Clean, Dry, and in Good Condition.**

- Place containers, packaging, tools, and other materials safely out of walking and driving areas.
- Clean up and properly dispose of trash.
- Place oily rags or other combustible trash in closed containers.
- Clean up any spills immediately.
  - Alert trained responders to major spills.
  - Follow safety data sheets for cleaning up a chemical spill.
- Watch out for dripping rain, melting ice, etc.
- Report any cracked or broken concrete or other flooring.

#### **3. Keep Dock Plates in Place.**

- Check dock plate load capacity to be sure it can handle your load.

- Secure movable dock boards in position, so they won't slip.
- Slide—don't drop—dock plates into position.

#### **4. Take Precautions to Prevent Falls.**

- Walk, don't run, on loading docks.
- Don't fool around or push someone, even as a joke.
- Stay away from loading dock edges.
- Don't jump onto or off a loading dock.
- Wear sturdy shoes with nonskid soles that support both the foot and ankle.
- Watch where you're going.

#### **5. Work Safely with Trucks and Trailers.**

- Check that truck and trailer wheels are chocked before loading or unloading.
- Make sure drivers turn off their motors to prevent carbon monoxide exposure.
  - Invisible and odorless, carbon monoxide can be fatal.

#### **6. Load and Unload Correctly to Prevent Injuries.**

- Use forklifts, dollies, and other aids or get help rather than lifting by yourself whenever possible.
- Never try to lift skids and pallets alone.
- When you do lift, bend your knees and keep your back straight so that your legs do the work (not your back).
- Wear snug-fitting gloves that provide good grip when lifting, loading, and unloading.
- Load hand trucks with heavy objects on the bottom and weight forward over the axle.
- Balance and secure hand truck loads; keep load height at a level you can see over.

#### **7. Be Alert to Other Vehicles, Workers, and Materials.**

- Don't try to ride on a forklift or distract the operator.

- Get out of the way when a forklift horn sounds.
- Pay attention to materials on the dock that could fall or roll.
- Wear a hard hat, eye protection, and hearing protection when required to protect against falling or flying objects or noise.