



Warehouse Operations

Many businesses have storage and warehouse facilities as an integral and important part of their operation. These may be very busy places at all times (such as in a logistics operation) or they may be quiet for many hours a day, but have periods of intense activity. Warehouses are dangerous places and people do get hurt in them in several ways. Many of the injuries suffered can be avoided by taking some simple steps; all derived from simple risk assessments.

What can be done to avoid accidents associated with warehouse operations?

Slips, trips and falls

- Ensuring good standards of housekeeping – keep walkways clean, clear and unobstructed.
- Ensure that spillages are cleaned up immediately that they occur or when they are noticed.
- Ensure that banding tapes, packaging materials and polythene, etc are not allowed to collect on the floors.
- Ensure that leaky roofs are repaired.
- Ensure that all staff are provided with (and wear) appropriate safety footwear.
- Ensure that the floors are maintained in good condition and that defects are repaired.

Manual Handling

- Arrange work such that the needs for manual handling are reduced (such as by the use of fork lift trucks, (powered)-pallet trucks, dock lifts, etc).
- Ensure that the risks associated with all manual handling operations are assessed and minimised, giving consideration to:
 - i. the task
 - ii. the load
 - iii. the working environment
 - iv. individual capability, and
 - v. other factors
- Ensure that there are always a sufficient number of employees to deal safely with the loads
- that need to be handled
- Arrange suitable training in manual handling for all warehouse staff (including temporary and
- agency workers)

Work at Height

- Avoid the need to work at height were possible.
- Avoid climbing on the top of loads where possible.
- Provide suitable, practical protection to areas from which people may fall (such as loading
- bays, etc).
- Provide suitable means of access for any elevated work area, such as racking locations, etc.
- Arrange for all access equipment to be checked regularly by a competent person.
- Instruct workers not to use inappropriate or defective access equipment (avoid the use of the forks on a fork lift truck or the use of a pallet on the truck, etc).
- Provide safe working platforms for accessing the back of vehicles (such as tankers or flat bed
- trucks) if accessed routinely.



Vehicles

- Manage the vehicles accessing the site – where possible, provide delivery drivers with relevant health and safety information about your site (times for deliveries, one-way system information, etc) before they arrive.
- Display suitable warning signs and notices.
- Consider have safety information available in different languages if regularly dealing with drivers from different countries.
- Provide clearly designated vehicle and pedestrian routes (where possible).
- Ensure that areas are adequately illuminated.
- Provide warehouse staff with high visibility clothing.
- Control the reversing of vehicles (consider the use of CCTV systems on your own vehicles).
- Provide workers with suitable and sufficient vehicle movement awareness training, banksman training, etc.
- Implement suitable controls for vehicles on site – such as warning signs, site speed limits, mirrors on “blind” corners and bends, etc.
- Ensure that all loads are safe before attempting to unload a vehicle.
- Ensure that all loads are secure before allowing a vehicle to leave site.
- Implement procedure to prevent vehicles from driving off prematurely (such as a key collection system or chocked wheel system).
- Ensure that the use of fork lift trucks is restricted to trained and authorised users.
- Restrict access to the warehouse to authorised persons and display suitable notices to this effect.

Falling Objects

- Ensure that all loads stored at height (such as on racking) are secure.
- Avoid working under other people.
- Assess the safety of loads before attempting to unload a vehicle.
- Ensure that all racking systems are adequate for the loads that will be stored on them.
- Display the safe loading limit of all racking systems.
- Carryout regular inspections of the racking and of the goods stored on the racking.
- Check the condition of wooden pallets and do not reused damaged pallets .
- Arrange for loose items to be secured (such as by shrink wrapping) before storage.

Mechanical Accidents

- Ensure that all plant and equipment provided for use in the warehouse (such as shrink wrapping equipment, conveyor systems, etc) is suitable for the task and is in good condition.
- Arrange for all equipment to be checked and inspected regularly by a competent person to ensure that it remains in good condition, to ensure that all guards are in place and that all emergency stops and other safety features and controls work.
- Restrict the use of plant and equipment to authorised persons only.

Exposure to chemicals

- Ensure that all chemical packaging is in good condition.
- Ensure that appropriate PPE is provided.
- Ensure that suitable washing facilities and emergency arrangements are in place for washing and for emergency eye wash.
- Ensure that safety data sheet are available for all substances used and/or stored on site.
- Ensure that all chemical packaging display suitable warning symbols.