

# **MATERIAL-STORAGE INJURIES**

## **A SAFETY TALK FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS**

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings.

Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it.

Seating space is not absolutely necessary, but arrangements should be made so that those attending can easily see and hear the presentation.

Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time. Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

## **DURING THE MEETING**

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide.

The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards they encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting.

At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

## **MATERIAL-STORAGE INJURIES**

While struck-by injuries are seldom thought of in connection with material-storage areas, they are, in fact, frequently the result of poor storage and handling procedures.

### **NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:**

Lead a discussion of the following problems and their solutions, using the examples mentioned. If there are other specific examples in your area, draw them out in discussion.

#### **Unstable stacking**

- Misalignment, causing material or stack to hang over shelf edges or to fall.
- Larger, heavier materials placed on top of smaller, lighter ones.
- Material stacked too high.
- Work stations within falling range of unsecured material in open storage.

**Solution:** Stack material according to its size, shape and weight. Put heavier material on lower shelves and under lighter material. Keep all material within the horizontal dimensions of the shelves. Place work stations outside the range of loose material that could fall.

#### **Unsafe placement**

- Material placed too close to sprinkler heads (within 18 inches), lights and ventilation, thereby blocking them.
- Incompatible materials such as acids and bleaches stored next to each other.
- Materials too heavy for rack's structure, or unsound rack.

**Solution:** Leave adequate space for utility functions. Separate incompatible materials. (Check materials' MSDSs.) Consider rack and shelf structure in planning storage, and replace unsound fixtures.

#### **Poor manual-materials-handling plan**

- Manually loaded materials placed too high or too low for safe manual handling.

**Solution:** Store all manually loaded materials between knee and shoulder height.

- Improper guarding of automated storage utilities resulting in protruding chains, gear or other parts that might strike or catch clothing or body parts.

**Solutions:** Make sure that guards, including barrier guards, are installed and functioning before using equipment. Allow only authorized personnel to be in area or operate the equipment. Shut equipment down before clearing the jam.

### **Misuse of power lift equipment and industrial trucks**

- Vehicles overload
- Equipment in need of repair
- Insufficient space for loading and unloading materials.

**Solutions:** Conduct daily inspections of trucks. Check and set capacity limits for all powerlift equipment. Do not exceed those limits. Use only trained and authorized operators. Post and enforce the speed limit.

All of the situations mentioned can cause or contribute to uncontrolled movement of materials. Attention to good material storage and handling procedures can eliminate or reduce painful and debilitating struck-by injuries.

#### **NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:**

Instruct your group members to audit their specific areas for potential problems and report back on improvements made or changes that should be made.

### **SAFE USE OF HAND PALLET TRUCKS**

#### **NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:**

After introducing the topic of hand pallet truck safety, ask if anyone has experienced or witnessed an accident involving a hand pallet truck. If so, ask for a description of what happened. Use incidents and past accidents to stress the importance of safe hand pallet truck operation.

A hand pallet truck is a three-wheeled hand-operated truck designed for moving pallets short distances. Safe operation pays off in several ways:

- You avoid injury to yourself and loss of work time.
- You prevent accidents involving coworkers
- You prevent damage to the equipment as well as the material you are handling.

**NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:**

Briefly review the operating instructions for hand pallet trucks with the group. Have a truck available for demonstration purposes. Cover the following procedures.

Hand pallet trucks have a simple raise/neutral/lower operating method.

- To raise the forks, push the actuating lever down and pump the handle up and down the pallet has reached the desired height. It is not necessary to pump until the full lifting height is reached. A clearance of one inch between the floor and pallet is usually sufficient to move the load.
- To move a load, engage the actuating lever in a neutral or middle position.

While this position disengages the lifting mechanism, making the handle free from hydraulic resistance, the forks remain in the raised position.

- Lower the forks by pulling the actuating lever past the neutral position.

Because the lever is spring-loaded for lowering, when you release the lever it will automatically return to the neutral position.

**NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:**

Discuss safe operating practices /rules with the group. Ask members to cite examples; record the examples on a blackboard or flip chart. Discuss how the observance of these practices or rules would have prevented past accidents and injuries.

**Safe operating practices/rules include:**

- Using only the neutral position when maneuvering loads to reduce operator fatigue.
- Avoiding the movement of loads up or down the ramps whenever possible. If you have to make an emergency stop on a ramp, stop the truck by lowering the load.
- Always working uphill from the pallet truck when moving the loads up or down a ramp.
- Pulling rather than pushing loads on long-distance moves, making it easier to see where you're going and to steer the load.
- Not riding or permitting riders on the truck.
- Parking the pallet truck out of traffic areas in a safe, level place with the handle up and forks lowered.

- Ensuring the stability of the load you are handling.
- Avoiding overloading the truck.
- Positioning the forks evenly under the load for safer movement and easier positioning.
- Not picking up a load on one fork.
- Checking in advance to make sure ramps, elevators and dockboards can handle the load.
- Always operating at a controllable speed, since hand pallet trucks do not have brakes.