

# TOOL BOX TALKS

## Loading Dock Safety

Loading docks present a myriad of hazards for employees. Serious injuries can happen on the doc. All of the equipment used on the loading dock is BIG and HEAVY like forklifts and big rigs. Not to mention the overhead obstructions, wet floors from rain and poor lighting when working inside the trailers. It can be said that the loading dock could be one of the most dangerous areas of the facility. Get together with employees and review these safety tips:

### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Have gloves handy for working with forklifts and wooden pallets.
- Have eye protection ready.
- Always wear protective footwear for hazards like trip hazards, nails and dropped pallets.

### FORKLIFTS

- Pedestrians and dock workers must be alert to the movement of forklifts.
- Stay out of the line of fire – beware caught-in-between hazards – never get between two forklifts, or a forklift and an object.
- Forklifts must operate slowly – no faster than walking speed.
- Forklift operators must be trained.
- Forks must be lowered fully when not in use.
- Forklift operators must keep an eye out for pedestrians and truck drivers – pedestrians always have the right-of-way.

### SEMI TRUCKS AND TRAILERS

- Semi trucks and trailers can “creep” forward when forklifts are moving in and out.
- Always chock tires of semi trailers.
- When a trailer is dropped (the tractor has left) always use a kingpin plate jack stand.
- Kingpin plate jack stands, combined with the trailer landing legs, prevent the trailer from tipping forward during loading / offloading.
- Inspect the trailer floor before moving out on it with a forklift.
- Pedestrians are not allowed in trailers during forklift unloading.

### DOCK LEVELERS / CROSS PLATES

Know the dock plate capacity.  
Routinely inspect dock levelers for hazards.  
Keep dock leveler wells clear of trash / waste.  
Keep dock levelers adjusted.

When a trailer is backed into position, the dock leveler must cross completely into the trailer.  
Never work beneath a raised dock leveler without blocking and bracing it.  
Return dock levelers to the cradle before allowing the trailer / truck to leave.

### LOADING DOCK BEST PRACTICES

- Never “dock jump” - knee injury could result.
- Never climb into a dock door as a fall could lead to serious injury.
- Keep dock doors closed to prevent falls and increase security.
- If dock doors must stay open for ventilation purposes, provide a guardrail system to prevent accidental fall.
- Keep dock floors dry – clean up spills or tracked rain water immediately.
- If drivers enter the facility, keep an eye out for them – ensure their safety and security.
- Make sure forklift spot lights function.
- Make sure trailer lights function to light the insides of dark trailers.
- When loading/offloading straight trucks, use a pallet jack instead of a forklift – straight trucks may not handle the weight of a forklift.
- Keep dock areas and stairs free of snow/ice.
- Do not smoke on the loading dock.
- Keep floors clear of trip hazards like trash, plastic strapping and shrink wrap.

**Work** **SAFE**

Smart, Accident-Free Environments

