Loading Dock Safety Plan

TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS

**Applicability.** The sample Loading Dock Safety Plan template (Plan) applies to material loading docks at general industry workplaces. It focuses on shipping and receiving areas for trucks and trailers. It does not apply to railcar or maritime operations.

The plan focuses on the safety requirements for the following OSHA regulations:

* Handling materials, 29 CFR 1910.176
* Personal protective equipment ,29 CFR 1910.132 to 29 CFR 1910.138
* Powered industrial trucks (e.g., forklifts), 29 CFR 1910.178
* Specifications for accident prevention signs and tags, 29 CFR 1910.145
* Walking and working surfaces, general requirements, 29 CFR 1910.22

**Basic elements of the Plan.** The Plan should include the following basic elements:

* Job hazard analysis
* Housekeeping
* Forklifts
* Manual lifting
* Aisles and passageways
* Slips, trips, and falls
* Trailer floor loading protection
* Unloading and loading trucks and trailers
* Hazardous materials
* Posters, signs, and markings
* Security
* Dock levelers
* Bay and doors
* Wheel chocks and other vehicle restraints
* Pedestrians
* Personal protective equipment (PPE)
* Employee training
* Recordkeeping

To assist in the prevention of accidents, employers must set safe work practices for employees involved in trailer-to-dock operations, and enforce those rules consistently. Employers must have some system to make sure that truck drivers do not pull away while powered industrial trucks are loading or unloading.

**Review and incorporate state regulatory requirements.** This Plan is based on federal requirements and/or best practices. Some states have laws and regulations that are stricter than federal requirements and that may affect how you customize this Plan. See the Safety.BLR.com® website for the regulatory analysis in your state, under the topics Material Handling, Forklifts, and Housekeeping. For all resources on loading dock safety, insert *“loading dock”* (including quotation marks) into the QuickSearch box in the upper-right corner of the webpage.

[Organization Name]

Loading Dock Safety Plan

Plan last updated:

**Scope:** This Loading Dock Safety Plan (Plan) applies to all personnel, including vehicle operators, who work in or around the loading dock area and other personnel that enter, use, or exit the loading dock.

**Policy:** The personal safety and health of each employee and visitors is of primary importance. The prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses is of such consequence that safe working conditions and practices will be given precedence over operating productivity, whenever necessary.

Plan Administration

**Personnel Contact Information**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Function** | **Name/Department** | **Contact Information** |
| Plan Administrator |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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**Plan Administrator.** The administrator will:

* Ensure that all the provisions of this Plan are implemented.
* Designate personnel to implement specific provisions of this Plan.
* Be responsible for maintaining all records and other documentation related to such activities.

**Supervisor(s).** The supervisor(s) will:

* Ensure that employees follow the safety practices and procedures of this Plan.
* Ensure that employees are trained according to their specific job tasks.
* Conduct regular and periodic safety meetings.
* Conduct inspections of work areas.

**Employees.** Each employee will:

* Participate actively in the facility’s safety program and observe all safety measures.
* Report all accidents and faulty equipment to a supervisor.
* Correct or report any safety hazard in his or her work area.
* Wear the proper PPE.

Plan Review and Update

This Plan will be reviewed and updated whenever:

* Applicable federal or state regulations change
* Operations at the facility change that require a revision to this Plan
* An accident investigation or safety audit warrant a plan revision

Job Hazard Analysis (JHA)

[See BLR’s Job Hazard Analysis Plan template for detailed information about conducting a JHA.]

The administrator or designee will conduct a JHA for each activity performed at the loading dock. The JHA process will determine hazards to personnel and property through careful and regular examination of the location(s) and procedures related to the loading dock, including the loading, unloading, and material-handling processes.

Recognized loading dock hazards include:

[Modify the following list as applicable to your facility.]

* Slips caused by wet or oily floors
* Falls from dock edges
* Falls caused by unsecured dock plates
* Carbon monoxide (CO) exposure from trucks and powered material-handling equipment
* Back injuries from improper lifting or carrying
* Head and eye injuries from falling objects
* Hearing damage from a loud noise level
* Injuries from careless operation of forklifts

Use the attached *Job* Hazard Analysis Worksheet and Job Hazard Analysis form or equivalent for conducting the analysis.

Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Dock Floor Loading

The administrator will ensure that the loading dock floors have the strength to support the workers, equipment, storage, and activities approved by the building code. No load will be placed on any floor or roof of a building or other structure in excess of the rated load for the structure or other load established in the applicable building code.

Vehicle Loading and Unloading Operations

Forklifts

No one under the age of 18 may operate a forklift or any other powered industrial truck. Only personnel who have received training certified by the administrator or designee are authorized to operate a forklift. All forklift operators must obey the safety rules and procedures specified in the Forklift Operator Plan***.***

**Forklift loading and unloading procedures.** In addition to any other forklift safety procedures adopted for the facility, forklift operators will comply with the following rules when loading or unloading materials with a forklift:

* Only handle stable and safely arranged loads.
* Never lift loads that exceed the rated capacity listed on the nameplate of the forklift.
* Before entering a trailer with a forklift, ensure that trailer brakes are locked, the rear wheels are chocked, and the dock plate is secure.
* Check the rated capacity of a trailer or railcar before entering it to ensure that it can support the combined weight of the forklift and load.
* Place the forks under the load as far as possible (the load will touch the forklift carriage) and tilt the mast backward enough to stabilize the load.
* Never carry anything on the overhead guard.
* Check the maximum safe height of an area before stacking or tiering a load.
* Never tilt the load forward unless depositing it onto a rack or stack.

Lifting Safely

The administrator will reduce or eliminate hazardous conditions that contribute to lifting injuries through engineering and administrative controls, whenever feasible.

[See the Lifting Safely Plan for examples of engineering and administrative controls applicable to your facility and insert here.]

Employees will use alternative material-handling techniques for carrying or moving loads whenever possible to minimize lifting and bending movements. Alternative material-handling techniques include the use of:

* Hoists
* Forklifts
* Dollies
* Handtrucks
* Carts

All employees will follow the safety rules and procedures for manual lifting specified in the Lifting Safely Plan***.***

Trailer Floor Protection

Fixed jacks may be necessary to support a trailer during loading or unloading when the trailer is not coupled to a tractor.

The flooring of trucks and trailers will be checked for breaks and weakness before they are accessed by powered industrial trucks.

Wheel Chocks

The brakes of truck trailers will be set and wheel chocks placed under the rear wheels of trailers and trucks to prevent them from rolling while they are boarded with forklifts or other powered industrial trucks.

Loading Dock Equipment

Dock plates

Check dock plate load capacity before piling up materials or starting to unload.

Slide the dock plate into place; do not drop it.

Dock Levelers and Bridges

Dock levelers and bridges can cause pinch points and elevated docks pose a fall hazard.

Employees will adhere to the weight capacity of the leveler or bridge before loading begins.

Ensure that the toe guards on levelers are in place.

Maintenance operations for levelers must follow the manufacturer’s instructions. If a standard leveler or bridge maintenance procedure is going to be changed, a thorough analysis of the changes will be performed before implementation to ensure that any hazards are abated.

Dock Drop-Off Barriers

A vacant loading dock can create a hazardous situation for dock personnel, material handlers, and pedestrians in the area. A safety barrier that can be manually positioned and removed by a single forklift operator will be installed to provide drop-off protection at the platform.

Conveyors

Employees will be trained to avoid contact with a conveyor belt's gears, shafts, and other moving parts. All conveyor guards will remain in place while the machinery is in operation. Employees will not wear loose clothes or jewelry when they work around a conveyor.

Vehicle Restraints

[Modify the following procedures as applicable to your operations.]

A positive mechanical means to secure trucks or trailers to a loading dock is allowed, provided the system is installed and used in a manner that effectively prevents movement of trucks and trailers during loading, unloading, and boarding by handtrucks and powered industrial trucks.

All mechanical restraint equipment will be installed, maintained, and used as recommended by the manufacturer.

Any damaged mechanical restraint equipment will be removed from service immediately.

A mechanical fastening device may be bolted to the loading dock to secure the truck or trailer rear-end protection device and prevent any separation from the dock.

Pedestrians

Forklifts and other vehicle traffic will yield the right-of-way to pedestrians. A safety information program will be implemented for pedestrians in and around the loading dock.

Housekeeping

[See the Housekeeping Plan for examples of engineering and administrative controls applicable to your facility and insert here.]

Aisles and Passageways

The following safe practices will be implemented by all loading dock personnel at all times:

* Keep aisles and passageways clear and marked as appropriate.
* Tape or otherwise anchor to the floor temporary electrical cords that cross aisles.
* Clean only one side of a passageway at a time.
* Ensure that working surfaces are dry.
* Ensure there is safe clearance for walking in aisles where motorized or mechanical handling equipment is operating.
* Store materials or equipment in such a way that sharp projections will not interfere with or protrude into aisles or passageways.
* Clean up small spills immediately, and report large spills to a supervisor.
* Arrange aisles or walkways that pass near moving or operating machinery, welding operations, or similar operations so that employees will not be subjected to potential hazards.
* Provide adequate headroom for the entire length of any aisle or walkway.
* Provide standard guardrails wherever aisle or walkway surfaces are elevated more than 30 inches above any adjacent floor or the ground.
* Bridges will be provided over conveyors and similar hazards.

Hazardous Materials

Employees handling packages or containers with hazardous materials will wear PPE assigned for use with such materials. Employees who handle such packages and containers will receive the appropriate hazard communication training before handling the materials. See the facility’s Hazard Communication Plan for more information.

Posters, Signs, and Markings

[See the Signs, Tags, and Markings Plan for examples applicable to your facility and insert here.]

Signs, tags, and markings will be provided and displayed in work areas to give employees adequate warning and caution of hazards and instructions for avoiding them.

All temporary accident prevention communications will be visible at all times when the hazard or problem exists, and will be removed or covered when the hazard no longer exists.

All employees will be informed of the meaning of the various signs, tags, and markings used throughout the workplace and any special precautions that may be required. See the Training section of this Plan for more information.

Security

The loading dock operating times are [insert operating days and hours]. The dock will be locked at [insert time].

Employees and other personnel who are not working or conducting business at the dock are prohibited from using the loading dock as an entrance or exit except in an emergency.

Parking

Parking at or adjacent to the loading dock is limited to authorized personnel.

General Deliveries

Security precautions will be established for all deliveries, including controlled bulk freight arriving at the facility.

Delivery personnel will only be admitted by [insert supervisor or other authorized agent].

Suspicious Packages

Loading dock personnel will comply with the following procedures for handling suspicious packages or mail:

[Modify these procedures as applicable to your facility.]

* Research inbound packages with incorrect or incomplete addresses to determine the correct name and location of the customer.
* Refuse delivery when correct customer addresses cannot be identified.
* Maintain files of all receipts and related documentation, including receiving reports, shipping documents, import/export documents, and discrepancy reports.
* Temporarily store delivered material and supplies for later pickup from the loading dock area when the recipient is not immediately available for delivery.

Overhead Doors

Overhead roll doors not controlled or locked by electric power will be protected by slide bolts on the bottom bar. Chain link doors will be provided with an iron keeper and pin for securing the hand chain. The shaft on a crank-operated door will be secured. A solid overhead, swinging, sliding, or accordion-type garage door will be secured with a cylinder lock or padlock. Also, a metal slide bar, bolt, or crossbar will be provided on the inside. Metal accordion grate or grill-type doors will have a secured metal guide track at the top and bottom and will be secured with a cylinder lock or padlock.

PPE

Supervisors will review loading dock areas and operations and ensure that workers are provided with the necessary PPE.

Employees are expected to wear such PPE. Failure to do so may lead to discipline up to and including termination.

All employees who work on or near the loading dock must wear slip-resistant footwear. No open-toed footwear or bare feet are allowed at the loading dock.

Employees handling packages or containers with hazardous materials will wear the PPE assigned for use with such materials.

Inspections

The administrator or designee(s) will conduct regular inspections of the loading dock areas to monitor hazards and ensure that safe work practices are implemented.

The administrator or designee(s) will develop housekeeping inspection schedules and checklists for the loading dock area with specific hazards or work processes that differ from those found in the facility as a whole.

Use the attached Loading Dock Checklist or equivalent form when conducting inspections.

Emergencies

The administrator or designee will ensure that:

* All evacuation routes are clearly marked and unobstructed.
* Access to fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment is unobstructed.
* All emergency-related signs, placards, posters, notices, and markings are clearly visible and legible at all times.
* All used emergency and fire-fighting equipment is replaced.

Hazardous Chemical Spill Control

The administrator or designee will implement procedures for the cleanup of large and small hazardous chemical spills at the facility.

Post-emergency cleanup operations will be conducted by personnel trained and authorized to perform specific cleanup tasks.

Large spills will be managed according to the facility’s Spill Prevention Safety Plan***.***

Small Spills

The following procedure will be followed by all employees when a small chemical spill less than [insert maximum quantity] has occurred:

1. Notify [insert name, such as the Emergency Coordinator and/or supervisor].
2. If toxic fumes are present, secure the area (with caution tape or cones) to prevent other personnel from entering.
3. Deal with the spill in accordance with the instructions described in the safety data sheet (SDS) or on the chemical label for the substance.
4. Small spills must be handled in a safe manner while wearing the proper PPE.
5. Use absorbent material to wipe up greasy, oily, or other liquid spills.
6. Dispose of absorbents properly and safely.

Accident Investigations

All incidents that result in injury to workers, as well as near misses, regardless of their nature, will be reported and investigated. Investigations will be conducted as soon after an incident as possible to identify the cause and means of prevention to eliminate the risk of recurrence.

In the event of an incident that results in serious injury, this Plan will be reevaluated to determine if additional practices, procedures, or training are necessary to prevent similar future incidents.

Use the Accident Investigation Report form or equivalent when conducting accident investigations.

Training

The administrator will provide safety training to all employees at the time of hire and as needed thereafter.

General Safety Training

General job safety and health training will include:

* An explanation of the organization’s safety program and general safety rules.
* Instructions to report unsafe conditions, work practices, and injuries.
* Information about medical services and first-aid assistance and location of assistance and materials.
* Slip, trip, and fall prevention.
* Lifting safety.
* The use of PPE on designated jobs.
* Information about chemical hazards to which employees could be exposed and other worker right-to-know information.
* Procedures for responding to emergencies and fire prevention.

Job-Specific Training

The administrator will ensure that job-specific instructions and training are given to workers regarding the hazards that are unique to their job assignments, including wearing and caring for PPE, if required for the job.

Safety Meetings

Supervisors will provide safety meetings or talks to employees as a group every [insert frequency] and to individual employees who fail to follow safe procedures.

Each safety meeting will be documented with an attendee sign-in sheet and a meeting agenda that includes the supervisor’s name, date of meeting, and subject(s) covered.

Forklift Operator

A prospective operator will be trained and certified before he or she is assigned to operate a forklift. A trainee will operate a forklift only under the direct supervision of a trainer who has the knowledge, training, and experience to train operators and evaluate their competence, and where the operation will not endanger the trainee or other employees.

Forklift operator training will consist of a combination of formal instruction and demonstrations performed by the trainer, practical exercises performed by the operator, and an evaluation of the operator’s performance.

See the Forklift Operator Plan for more information about operator training requirements.

Recordkeeping

Copies of all hazard assessments and inspection checklists will be maintained at [insert location] for [insert duration].

Records of training (dates of training, attendee lists, and trainers) will be maintained at [insert location] for [insert duration].

Attachments

Job Hazard Analysis Plan

Signs, Tags, and Markings Plan

Forklift Operator Plan

Hazard Communication Plan

Housekeeping Plan

Lifting Safely Plan

Accident Investigation Report [#110102]

Job Hazard Analysis Form [#110089]

Job Hazard Analysis Worksheet [#110424]

Loading Dock Checklist