



Stocking involves hazards related to using and working near powered lift trucks, working near equipment that may be poorly chosen, defective or misused (e.g., bin bays, racking, pallets and skids) working in locations that may be dangerous (e.g., on mezzanines, near stacked goods) and handling ergonomic challenges (e.g., awkward loads and working overtime).

## Hazard: Using Powered Lift Trucks

### Details

Powered lifting devices are responsible for many accidents and injuries (e.g., collisions with people, falls from heights, damage to racking, chemical spill).

### Threat

- Injuries from falls
- Crushed feet, toes
- Serious injury or death

### Safe Work Guidelines

#### Before You Drive a Powered Lift Truck

- Make sure that you are fully competent before you operate the truck unsupervised
- Make sure that you have been trained to recognize the early signs of mechanical breakdown and that you check routinely for them
- If you are likely to reverse your lift truck near people, make sure the truck has warning lights and alarms that pedestrians can hear

#### While You Are Driving a Lift Truck

- If possible, make sure that your load does not block your field of view
- Make sure that surfaces you drive on have no ruts or waste materials
- **Do not** use the forks as platforms or allow anyone to stand or ride on the forks
- To reach high bins and shelves, use a platform that meets or exceeds the minimum legal requirements
- **Do not** overload lift trucks

**See *Industrial Establishments Regulation 851 (s.52)***

#### At All Times

- If possible, keep lift trucks and people apart by using clearly marked lines or barriers
- If you work near forklift trucks, make sure that you have been trained in pedestrian safety

### Hazard: Poor Bin Bay Selection

#### Details

Placing and picking product can put a great deal of stress on your body if you must bend at your waist, reach and twist to do the work.

#### Threat

- Back injury
- Muscle strain in your back and shoulders

#### Safe Work Guidelines

- Use high storage locations only for overstock items
- Place product that is handled frequently on shelves that are at or above knee height but not above shoulder height
- Place heavy product that must be lifted by hand at a height that allows you to lift between your knees and chest
- If possible, place heavy product in bin bays that allow 16 inches between pallets for easier access during picking

### Hazard: Unstable Racking

#### Details

Racking that has been damaged or is overloaded may become unstable, leading to collapse.

#### Threat

- Serious injury

#### Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that racking is able to support the load – If you are not sure, ask your supervisor
- Report any damaged racking to your supervisor right away
- Make sure that you have been trained how to

stack product safely on the racks

- **Do not** hit racking with powered lifting devices
- If corner uprights are not protected against collision damage, suggest to your supervisor that this protection be provided

### Hazard: Pallets and Skids

#### Details

Loads can fall from racking or storage if a pallet breaks. Also lifting a bad pallet that is loaded can cause product to unexpectedly fall on employees in the area. Improperly stored pallets can fall and hit employees.

#### Threat

- Serious injury
- Chemical burns, dizziness, skin and lung problems

#### Safe Work Guidelines

- Look closely at pallets as they arrive and remove any that are in poor condition
- Before using a pallet, check it for broken, missing or loose slats and discard a damaged one right away
- To prevent bending or breaking when skids are lifted, make sure that they are strong enough for the loads to be placed on them
- Choose a skid that is appropriate for the load
- Make sure that loads are evenly distributed and will not collapse
- Make sure that loads do not extend beyond the pallet
- Store pallets flat, not leaning against racks posts or walls
- Store pallets outdoors, if possible, to reduce the fire hazard

## Hazard: Poor Stocking Practices

### Details

Serious injury or damage can result if loads tip and fall from racks, push other loads into the aisle or hit sprinklers, gas lines, lights or heating equipment during restocking. If product becomes wet and heavy, racks could collapse.

### Threat

- Head or other serious injury

### Safe Work Guidelines

#### Before You Stock Product

- Make sure that you are trained;
  - to use the equipment, and
  - received safe stocking procedures
- Before you operate equipment in high locations, check clearances such as pipes, lights, and sprinklers

#### While You Are Stocking Product

- Place product well clear of sprinkler heads, lights, electrical panels, and emergency equipment
- Keep stored materials at least 18 inches away from heaters (36 inches away if the materials are combustible)
- Stack loads straight and evenly
- Correct loads that look out of balance
- If a load looks unstable, secure it with plastic wrapping or strapping
- If there is a load beside where you will be placing your load, first make sure that there is enough space (be careful that you do not push the nearby load into the next aisle)
- Follow your workplace's procedure for preventing injury

## Hazard: Awkward Loads

### Details

The stress that a load places on your back depends on factors such as the weight of the load and your ability to get a firm grip. Loads can lead to injuries if they are heavy or bulky, have inadequate hand-holds, or are wrapped in plastic.

### Threat

- Back injuries (e.g., muscle strain, disc injury), muscle strain in your hands, arms, shoulders and back

### Safe Work Guidelines

- If possible, reduce the weight of the load by breaking open the package and removing some items
- If possible, remove plastic wrapping to allow a firmer grip on the load

#### **Note: Your employer should work with suppliers to:**

- Provide product in smaller, lighter containers
- Provide product in stable boxes with handles or hand-hold cut-outs
- Put a slip sheet between layers of plastic-wrapped packages
- Wrap only the sides and tops of cases, leaving the cardboard bottom exposed to make sliding easier

## Hazard: Opening Boxes

### Details

You may be exposed to stressful posture and have to apply force when cutting tops from boxes and doing other cutting tasks. Working with box cutters or knives can also lead to cuts. When you are removing strapping from boxes, it can snap back and strike you.

### Threat

- Cuts
- Eye and hand injury
- Tendonitis, pain and tenderness near the elbow (epicondylitis) and, possibly, carpal tunnel syndrome
- Injury from tripping

### Safe Work Guidelines

#### Before You Start

- Make sure that your cutting tools use a power grip rather than a pinch grip with the fingers (the handles should be well rounded, bent to reduce bending your wrist and made of non-slip material)
- Make sure that your cutting tools are in good working condition to avoid the need for excessive force

#### While You Are Working

- Do not segment tasks (e.g., do not open all the boxes before starting to empty any of them)
- Vary your motions so that overused muscles have time to rest while you do other parts of the task
- When you are working with strapping, use safety goggles and leather gloves
- Throw out waste strapping right away so that it does not trip anyone

- Cut open boxes on surfaces that are about 15-40 cm (6-16inches) below elbow height
- Cut away from your body

## Hazard: Hazardous Loads

### Details

If loads containing hazardous materials are dropped or are hit by equipment, containers may break.

### Threat

- Serious injury
- Lung damage, burns, skin problems (dermatitis)

### Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that you have had generic and specific Workplace Hazardous Material Information Systems (WHMIS) training and that you know what to do if a chemical is released or spilled
- To ensure that you handle product appropriately, read the product labels first
- Wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) required by your employer and by the material safety data sheets (MSDS) for the substances you are likely to handle
- Prepare a spill kit with PPE and spill containment materials

## Hazard: Stacking

### Details

Poorly stacked goods may fall, injuring workers

### Threat

- Cuts and bruises
- Serious injury

## Safe Work Guidelines

- If you are working in an area with goods stacked high above you, consider using a hard hat
- Inspect pallets used for storage regularly and remove damaged ones right away
- Shrink wrap, chain or use another suitable restraint on materials that may tip or fall
- Make sure that you have been trained in safe methods of stacking and removing products from stacks
- Limit the height at which product is stored
- Do not place a product on racking that is damaged – tell your supervisor about the damage

## Hazard: Mezzanines

### Details

If you work on a mezzanine that is not properly guarded, there is a risk of falling. Product could fall from mezzanine used for storage and hit people below.

### Threat

- Serious injury or death

### Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that the mezzanine has a suitable guardrail
- Before you start work on the mezzanine, make sure that you replace any guarding you moved to enter it
- **Do not** store loose items or liquids in mezzanines above work area

## Hazard: Standing for Long Periods

### Details

When you stand for long periods of time, your leg muscles continually support your body, which can cause extreme tiredness.

### Threat

- Muscle and joint injury (e.g., carpal tunnel syndrome, bursitis, tendonitis) back and neck pain

### Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that you wear the right footwear for your job
- Wear padded shoe inserts that support your feet
- Take mini-breaks, sitting down to relieve your stress on your leg muscles or rotate through tasks that use different muscle groups during a shift

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