

Warehouse safety

Protect pedestrians, reduce injuries and improve safety at your warehouse

It's a fact: The fatal injury rate for the warehouse industry is higher than the national average for all industries, according to OSHA. Pedestrians, in particular, face unique risks in warehouses.

What are the major causes of pedestrian injuries in warehouses?

- Powered industrial trucks (PITs) or forklifts
- Improper stacking of products

How can you reduce the likelihood of pedestrians being injured in your warehouse?

PIT operators, managers and pedestrians can all take steps to reduce hazards. Use these tips from OSHA, NSC and NSC member companies to stay safe:

Operators:

- Always wear a seat belt and keep all parts of your body within the running lines of the PIT while it is in motion
- Always keep your eyes up and focused on where you're heading
- Never move at a speed greater than 5 mph and limit your speed to 3.5 mph in congested areas or when pedestrians are present
- Always stop and wait for pedestrians to cross your planned route
- Always sound your horn at blind corners, doorways, aisles, intersections and whenever you reverse

- Always use a spotter for blind spots
- Avoid quick stops, which can cause loads to spill or move forward and create hazards
- Always travel with PIT blades 3 – 5 inches off the ground
- Stay aware of overhead and side clearance, especially near doorways, tunnels and trailers

Safety managers:

- Mirrors should be mounted on PITs and at blind corners
- Ensure PITs have mounted warning spotlights, which can alert pedestrians in noisy workplaces and provide warning for those wearing hearing protection or with hearing differences
- Be sure all operators are trained regularly in the proper use of their vehicles
- Always perform pre-shift PIT inspections to detect defects in vehicle operation or alarm systems
- Protected and clearly marked pedestrian walkways should be provided anywhere PITs are used
- Install railings or other protective barriers to keep pedestrians and PITs separated
- If possible, place stop signs, crossing gates, or other devices such as alarms or motion detectors, at known blind spots and intersections between pedestrian walkways and PIT pathways



Employees and other pedestrians:

- Stay at least 7 feet away from operating PITs at all times
- Stay at least 2 feet away from stopped PITs
- Stay at least 25 feet away from PITs accessing material at height or carrying non-standard loads
- Never approach PITs from behind, as you may be in the operator's blind spot
- Stay vigilant around loaded and moving PITs, which require more time and distance to safely stop
- Never ride on a PIT as a passenger
- Never walk under a PIT's suspended load

Another important consideration: Materials should be handled and stored safely around the warehouse

- Loads of materials should be stacked evenly, with heavier loads placed on lower or middle shelves
- All chemicals should be stored according to the manufacturer's recommendations
- Keep aisles and passageways clear
- Uneven items, like bags, containers and bundles, should be stored in tiers that are limited in height to prevent falling hazards

Everyone can play a part in reducing warehouse injuries

Working together, PIT operators, safety managers and pedestrians can avoid warehouse incidents and stay safe.

TOGETHER, WE CAN KEEP EACH OTHER SAFE!

References

Government Institutes, Warehouse Safety. *A Practical Guide to Preventing Warehouse Incidents and Injuries* by George Swartz, CSP

National Safety Council, *Lift Truck Operator*

Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Powered Industrial Trucks (Forklift), *Pedestrian Traffic*

ANSI-ITSDF B56, 1a-2018 section 5.320 Occupational Safety and Health Administration, *OSHA Pocket Guide, Worker Safety Series: Warehousing*

