



SAFE STACKING OF MATERIALS

In the rush to complete tasks and meet deadlines, the proper loading, unloading, and storage of materials can sometimes be overlooked. However, incorrect handling in these areas can lead to severe injuries, paralysis, or even fatalities, far beyond minor cuts or bruises.

Consider the potential dangers: incorrectly loaded material on a truck can fall off and injure a worker; material sticking out into a pathway can cause someone to trip and fall; and improperly stacked items can collapse. It's also important to ensure materials can be safely retrieved from storage.

Safe Stacking

- Ensure materials are not stacked so high that they risk toppling over or collapsing.
- Store heavy and unstable items as low to the floor as possible.
- Secure loads properly on pallets, ensuring the pallets are in good condition and the correct size and type for the load.
- Stack items of the same size and weight together whenever possible.
- Alternate rows when stacking bags or bundles of material (e.g., one row lengthwise, the next widthwise).
- Maintain adequate space for workers, forklifts, and other lifting devices to navigate safely and efficiently.
- Stack brick guards neatly and securely to prevent wind dislodgement.
- Block or chock the bottom tiers of round items to prevent shifting or rolling.
- Avoid stacking materials so high that they block sprinklers, come into contact with ignition sources, or are near energized electrical wires.

Common Hazards

Regardless of the work environment, common storage-related hazards often include:

- Lack of space
- Poor loading and unsecured stacks
- Damaged pallets
- Unsafe or unsecured racking or shelving
- Using the wrong pallet for the racking system

Questions for Discussion

1. What should you consider before loading materials into a stack?
2. Does our PPE address all hazards related to the materials we manually handle?