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# **LOADING DOCK SAFETY**

**Leader's Guide, Fact Sheet  
& Quiz**

**Item Number: 5090**

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***This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation.***

## **PREPARING FOR THE MEETING**

Here are a few suggestions for using this program:

- a) Review the contents of the Fact Sheet that immediately follows this page to familiarize yourself with the program topic and the training points discussed in the program. The Fact Sheet also includes a list of Program Objectives that details the information that participants should learn from watching the program.
- b) If required by your organization, make an attendance record to be signed by each participant to document the training to be conducted.
- c) Prepare the area and equipment to be used for the training. Make sure the watching environment is comfortable and free from outside distractions. Also, ensure that participants can see and hear the TV screen or computer monitor without obstructions.
- d) Make copies of the Review Quiz included at the end of this Leader's Guide to be completed by participants at the conclusion of the presentation. Be aware that the page containing the answers to the quiz comes before the quiz itself, which is on the final page.

## **CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION**

- a) Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person an opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.
- b) Introduce the program by its title and explain to participants what they are expected to learn as stated in the Program Objectives of the Fact Sheet.
- c) Play the program without interruption. Upon completion, lead discussions about your organization's specific policies regarding the subject matter. Make sure to note any unique hazards associated with the program's topic that participants may encounter while performing their job duties at your facility.
- d) Hand out copies of the review quiz to all of the participants and make sure each one completes it before concluding the training session.

## 5090 LOADING DOCK SAFETY FACT SHEET

**LENGTH: 17 MINUTES**

### **PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:**

A loading dock can be a very busy place. It's an area where trucks, trailers, workers and materials handling equipment all come together, loading and unloading, lifting and carrying and positioning and stacking. A loading dock full of hustle and bustle is a sign of a healthy business, but these conditions also increase hazards and cause a tragic number of injuries and fatalities every year. Employees need to understand the hazards that they can encounter while working on a loading dock and know the equipment and safe practices they should use to avoid them. This program reminds employees that they can prevent accidents and injuries on loading docks by using appropriate equipment and following safe work practices.

Topics include staying alert on loading docks, preventing slips, trips and falls, docking transport vehicles, securing docked vehicles, trailer tipover/early departure and operating forklifts and motorized pallet jacks safely.

### **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

After watching the program, the participant should:

- Understand the hazards that are associated with working on a loading dock.
- Understand the hazards that can be created by the vehicles themselves that load and unload on a dock.
- Know the equipment and safe work practices that should be used to avoid these hazards.
- Know how to reduce hazards when operating materials handling equipment on a loading dock.

### **PROGRAM OUTLINE:**

#### **LOADING DOCKS CAN BE DANGEROUS**

- **A loading dock can be a very busy place.**
  - It's an area where trucks, trailers, workers and materials handling equipment all come together, loading and unloading, lifting and carrying and positioning and stacking.
- **A loading dock full of hustle and bustle is a sign of a healthy business, but all that activity can also be dangerous.**
  - The loading and unloading operations that are performed on a loading dock often need to be done quickly, and in very tight spaces.
  - Conditions like these tend to increase the hazards that workers are exposed to.
- **Thousands of injuries occur on loading docks every year, but there are procedures we can all follow to help us stay safe when we're on a dock.**

#### **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

- **Before you head out to work on a loading dock, you need to make sure that you're wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment. At the very least you should have:**
  - Sturdy work boots with non-slip soles and steel toes to protect you from falls and dropped objects.
  - Gloves to guard your hands against abrasive or splintery surfaces.
- **A hardhat or bump cap can also be important, to protect your head from falling objects or bumping into things in tight spaces.**
  - You may need to wear eye protection, a dust mask, cold weather gear or other PPE in some situations as well.

#### **STAYING ALERT ON LOADING DOCKS**

- **All loading docks include a raised platform that gives access to trucks, trailers and other transport vehicles for convenient loading and unloading.**
  - These platforms tend to be crowded.
  - Because they are "off the ground", they have a built-in falling hazard.
- **Remember to think "safety first" on a loading dock.**
  - Walk, don't run.
  - Watch where you're going.
- **Stay alert for any materials handling equipment that may be operating nearby.**

- The drivers of forklifts and pallet trucks may not always see you, so it's important to keep well clear of them.
- Don't let moving equipment pin you against a wall or a fixed object like a bollard or push you off the edge of the dock!
- **These machines can also turn very sharply, and when they do, their back ends swing out wide.**
- So keep your distance so they don't hit you.
- **Watch out for their forks as well.**
- Because they can travel close to the ground, machines' forks can sometimes be hard to see.
- **Stay out of trucks and trailers when they are being loaded or unloaded by powered equipment.**
- **Never work, stand or walk under a raised load.**

#### USING MATERIALS HANDLING EQUIPMENT

- **Whenever you use equipment such as a dolly, pallet jack or forklift, proceed slowly and use caution.**
- Watch out for other people and give them the right of way.
- **Don't stack material so high that you have trouble seeing where you're going.**
- Make sure the load is stable and secure so it won't fall off, get damaged or hurt somebody.
- **Never ride a manual pallet jack like a scooter or try to "hitch a ride" on powered equipment.**
- **When a truck pulls into your loading dock, remember that the cargo inside may have shifted while in transit.**
- Stand back from the doors when they are first opened, so you don't get hit if something comes tumbling out.

#### SAFE LIFTING PROCEDURES

- **When loading and unloading, people often hurt their backs because they do their lifts incorrectly, or try to lift something that's too heavy.**
- **You should always follow safe lifting procedures.**
- Lower yourself by bending at the knees.
- Keep your back straight.
- Then lift the load gradually, with your leg muscles.
- **Don't try to lift heavy or awkward loads by yourself.**
- Ask a coworker to give you a hand or use a dolly or hand cart.

#### PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

- **Slips, trips and falls are involved in many of the accidents that occur on a loading dock, but you can avoid these hazards by following a few safe work practices.**
- To start, good housekeeping can help prevent slips, trips and falls.
- **Whether the dock you're working on is inside or outside, you should keep an eye on the weather.**
- Be prepared to clear away any rainwater, snow or ice that accumulates or finds its way inside.
- **Liquid spills and build-ups of grease and grime can also create slip hazards on a dock.**
- Make sure these substances are cleaned off all surfaces as soon as possible.
- **The same goes for any clutter that could get underfoot.**
- Don't leave containers, empty pallets or tools lying around.
- Put them away where they belong.
- **Pick up discarded packaging materials, trash and debris and dispose of it properly.**
- **Slip and trip hazards can also be created by wear or damage to a loading dock's surface.**
- If you see holes, cracks, loose flooring or similar problems, report them to your supervisor immediately, so they can be repaired.
- **The surfaces of most loading docks are elevated from 44" to 48" inches off the ground.**
- Whether you're working outside on an "open" dock or inside on a "flush" or "enclosed" dock, this raised platform creates a significant fall hazard.
- Always stay away from the edge of a dock and watch where you're going.
- **Flush docks can be especially hazardous since the doors are at the very edge of the dock.**
- To prevent accidents, doors should be kept shut when the dock is not in use.
- If the doors need to be open to improve ventilation, barriers should be installed to prevent falls.
- **If the vertical drop from any type of dock measures more than 48" inches, OSHA requires that a protective guardrail be installed.**
- For shorter drops, visual barriers such as chains or plastic webbing are acceptable.
- **When making your way around a dock, don't jump onto or off of it to "get there faster".**

— "Dock jumping" is risky behavior that can often lead to knee injuries... or a lot worse.

### **DOCKING TRANSPORT VEHICLES**

• **When a truck or trailer is parked at a loading dock, special equipment is used to bridge the gap between the dock and the vehicle and even out any height difference between them.**

— "Dock plates" and "dock boards" are portable units that can be installed as needed.

— "Dock levelers" are heavy-duty units that are built into the edge of the dock itself.

• **It's important to watch your step around this equipment because it can create trip hazards.**

• **Dock plates and boards should rest securely in place, with at least eight inches of overlap onto both the dock and the truck or trailer floor.**

— Dock levelers should extend fully into the vehicle.

• **The height difference between a loading dock and a trailer floor can sometimes result in these "bridges" sloping between the two surfaces.**

— Operating materials handling equipment on too steep a slope can cause the equipment to get hung up, or even spill the load.

— A slope as little as seven degrees can create a problem.

— If you think a bridge's grade might be too steep, consult your supervisor before you drive any equipment across it!

• **When you've finished the loading or unloading process:**

— Dock plates and boards should be removed and stored out of the way for future use.

— Dock levelers should be retracted flush with the surface of the dock so no one trips over them.

### **SECURING DOCKED VEHICLES**

• **Different types of vehicles pull up at loading docks for loading and unloading, including vans, panel trucks, tractor-trailers, even rail cars.**

— For work to proceed safely, it's very important for all of them to be secured at the dock.

• **When docked vehicles are not secured, they can be prone to a hazard known as "trailer creep", also called "dock walk".**

— Trailer creep results from the loading and unloading activity inside the vehicle itself.

• **For example, every time a forklift enters a trailer and puts on its brakes, the momentum gives the trailer a little push forward.**

— This can cause a gap to open up between the trailer and the dock.

— Serious injuries, even fatalities, can result if dock workers or equipment fall into the gap.

• **To help prevent trailer creep, drivers of vehicles that arrive at a dock are expected to turn off their engines and set the parking brakes.**

• **If a forklift or motorized pallet truck will be used in the unloading process, OSHA regulations also require the vehicle's wheels to be chocked.**

— It's important to remember that wheel chocks are not foolproof.

— Activity in the vehicle can still dislodge them.

• **Whenever possible, trucks and trailers should be secured using a "mechanical restraint system", which is usually built into the dock itself.**

— These devices secure the vehicle by locking around its rear axle or bumper.

### **TRAILER TIPOVER & EARLY DEPARTURE**

• **A semi-trailer that has been parked and left behind at a dock by its tractor, or "dropped", can pose a special type of hazard.**

• **If the trailer's landing legs are weak or damaged, the combination of the load's weight and activity inside the trailer can cause them to collapse.**

— This can result in the trailer falling forward, and sometimes to the side as well.

• **"Trailer tipover" is not only hazardous to anyone inside the trailer, but also opens up a hazardous gap at the rear that people and equipment could fall into.**

— To prevent a tipover, jack stands may need to be installed under the front end of a trailer to provide extra support while it's parked.

• **Another type of problem, called "early departure", can occur when a driver mistakenly pulls their vehicle away from a dock while loading or unloading is still going on.**

- **Early departure can cause workers and machinery to fall off the back of the vehicle, resulting in serious injuries. To prevent this:**
  - Some facilities hold onto a driver's keys until the loading or unloading of their vehicle is completed.
  - Others place caution flags at the front of the vehicle or use caution lights connected to the dock's restraint system.
- **Loading dock personnel can do their part to ensure no misunderstandings occur by taking the time to communicate clearly with drivers while their vehicles are at a dock.**
- **Securing railway cars is a very specialized process.**
  - If you dock rail cars at your facility, ask your supervisor for more information about what procedures you should follow.

#### **OPERATING FORKLIFTS & MOTORIZED PALLET JACK SAFELY**

- **Dock employees who drive forklifts and motorized pallet trucks will have received training in the OSHA regulations that apply to their equipment, as well as how to operate it safely and effectively on a dock.**
  - On a busy and crowded loading dock, there can be additional considerations and hazards to watch out for.
- **Working safely with this equipment on a dock requires you to always stay alert, use caution and follow safe operating procedures to the letter.**
  - You should drive the equipment slowly, at no faster than a walking pace.
  - Watch out for pedestrians and give them the right of way.
- **Remember that pedestrians may not be familiar with how forklifts and pallet trucks move.**
  - When you're operating in their vicinity, be mindful of how your vehicle swings when you change direction.
- **Whether or not you are carrying a load, keep the forks of the forklift low.**
  - If you stop to take a break, lower the forks fully.
- **Working at such close quarters, it's critical for you to maintain control of the equipment.**
  - Rainwater, ice and snow that accumulate on a loading dock can cause a forklift or pallet truck to skid.
  - Hydraulic fluid, oil or grease will have a similar effect.
- **So pay close attention to the condition of the dock's surface.**
  - If you encounter skid hazards, make sure they are cleaned up immediately.
- **Most loading docks are about four feet above ground level.**
  - This vertical drop can create a serious falling hazard, both for materials handling equipment and its operators.
  - To prevent problems, safe work practices need to be followed.
- **Before driving across dock plates, dock boards or dock levelers, you should check that they:**
  - Are rated to support the combined weight of the equipment and the load.
  - Are properly positioned, with at least 8 inches of overlap on the vehicle and the dock.
  - Are not sloped at an unsafe angle.
  - And are secure.
- **Before you drive onto a truck or trailer, check that it is strong enough to support the weight of your equipment and its load.**
  - To do that, you'll need to check the vehicle's floor for damage or other weakness.
- **This is also a good time to make sure there's enough light inside the vehicle for you to see clearly.**
  - If necessary, arrange for additional lighting to be installed.
- **At this point you can proceed with the process of loading and unloading.**
  - Drive straight across bridge plates, dock plates and levelers at right angles.
  - Remember to beep your horn when you enter and exit the vehicle.

## LOADING DOCK SAFETY

### ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ

1. a
2. b
3. a
4. b
5. b
6. a
7. b
8. a
9. a
10. b

## LOADING DOCK SAFETY

### REVIEW QUIZ

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*The following questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.*

1. When you are working on a loading dock, you should always stay alert for any materials handling equipment that is operating close to you.
  - a. True
  - b. False
2. "Dock levelers" are portable devices that are used to ensure that a parked vehicle will not roll forward while it is being loaded or unloaded.
  - a. True
  - b. False
3. A "mechanical restraint system" works by locking onto the rear axle or bumper of a vehicle that is docked at a loading dock.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. You can rely on wheel chocks to prevent trailer creep because once they are in place they cannot be dislodged.
  - a. True
  - b. False
5. Dock plates, dock boards and dock levelers that are properly positioned should have at least two inches of overlap on both the dock and a vehicle that is parked there.
  - a. True
  - b. False
6. When they are not in use, dock levelers should be retracted flush with the surface of a loading dock so that no one trips over them.
  - a. True
  - b. False
7. Pedestrians should give materials handling equipment the right of way on a loading dock.
  - a. True
  - b. False
8. A forklift operator should beep their horn as they enter and exit any vehicle that is docked at a loading dock.
  - a. True
  - b. False
9. When you're operating a forklift on a loading dock, you should always keep the forks low to the ground.
  - a. True
  - b. False
10. Even if there's water, ice or snow on a loading dock, the heavy weight of a forklift will prevent its tires from skidding.
  - a. True
  - b. False