Loading Docks

Risks Associated with Loading Docks

- Slips, falls and cuts
- The potential of being:
    - Crushed between a truck and a loading dock
    - Caught between two vehicles
    - Hit by falling material, equipment or material moving equipment
    - Caught by conveyors

General Practice

- Keep loading docks cleaned and free of obstructions, debris and stored items
- Clean all spills immediately
    - Cover all grease and oil spills with absorbent materials and clean up immediately
- Keep the area free of snow and ice — immediately salt or sand slippery areas
- Stay clear of equipment when handling heavy or long loads
- Outline the traffic area with painted (or taped) lines
    - Apply paint (or tape) near the edge of the dock to reduce the risk of people stepping or driving off
- Install corner mirrors or a curved ceiling mirror in areas where there is poor visibility (such as corners, angles or curves in the traffic path or near doors)
- Prevent rolling — chock all material and equipment that can roll
- Secure any tools and equipment that can fall
- Provide a shelter to protect the loading dock, dock plates and trailer from the elements
- Use dock levelers and fixed-position hydraulic dock boards on high-use docks that receive a variety of trucks or railcars
- Provide the minimum recommended lighting of 20-foot candles
    - Additional illumination will be required for reading
- If chemicals are being handled in this area, install a working emergency shower and eyewash station

Loading Dock Safety

- Remember the loading dock is *not* a storage area
- Make sure the area is clear of vehicles before walking directly in front of a loading dock
- Always stand to the side when directing the driver of a backing vehicle

Vehicle

- Turn off engines at the shipping doors
- To prevent rolling, place wheel chocks ahead of rear wheels
- Ensure powered fork trucks do not *push* the vehicle away from the dock
- Conduct a complete vehicle walk-around before pulling away from the dock

Trailer

- All trailers being loaded or unloaded require the use of mechanical restraints (blocks and wheel chocks)
- Support the load and the material handling equipment — use nose jacks
    - Built-in nose jacks may not be strong enough for some loads
- Trailers with movable tandem wheels should be supported by jacks at the rear, or have the tandem moved to the rear, to ensure freight and trailer are stable for loading and unloading
- Check for hazards before working inside the trailer, such as:
    - Broken planking
    - Holes
    - Unstable freight
    - Structural damage
- Recommended trailer lighting is a minimum of 10 candlepower
    - Protect temporary lighting and cabling to prevent damage or shorts
- Remove obstructions, debris and unused blocking before loading the trailer
- Prevent shifting by bracing heavy or unstable items inside the trailer
- Follow your organization’s hazardous material procedures

Dock plates, Ramps/Gangways

A dock plate is a ramp positioned between the loading dock and the trailer or railcar used for loading and unloading purposes. Dock plates are either metal plates manually placed, or hydraulic plates built into the loading dock.

- Dock plates are designed to support at least four times the load planned, including the freight and material handling equipment
- Plates should be flush with the surface to minimize movement and wear at the edges
- The lip on the edges is designed to prevent mobile equipment from falling off
- Identify the dock plate tripping points with paint or tape
- Inspect hydraulic dock plates regularly
    - A certified person must inspect the dock plate at least once a year
- Check manual dock plates regularly for signs of wear (such as corrosion or failure of the material or welds)
- Anchor devices should be used to ensure the plate does not move when in use
- Use handholds or loops for the forklift to move the dock plates
- Before using a dock plate, make sure the plate is anchored