

Operating a safe warehouse

Are your warehouse operations as safe as they could be?

According to Health and Safety Executive (UK) statistics, approximately 28,000 workers in the United Kingdom alone sustain non-fatal injuries at work each year. Slip, trip and fall incidents account for 32% of these injuries and being struck by a moving or falling object accounts for 11%. The average annual rate of fatal injury in the transport and storage sector is around twice the average rate across all other industries.

Creating a safe and secure environment can not only reduce the risk of injury to staff but also reduce cargo damage and its impact on profitability. This TT Brief highlights good practice you should consider to reduce the risk of accidents in your warehouses.

What are the risks?



How can you mitigate these risks?

Here we highlight primary areas of concern and recommended actions to ensure safe warehouse operations

PERSONNEL AND VISITORS

- Clearly mark pedestrian pathways inside and outside warehouse facilities
- Eliminate blind spots/corners with use of mirrors/technology
- Restrict and control the use of mobile devices in operational areas
- Implement risk assessed permits for work at height in enclosed spaces and for hot work
- Restrict access to areas where moving machinery is used
- Implement tag out/lock out procedures for maintenance on electrical or moving machinery
- Control visitor access strictly (by appointment only, always escorted on site)



FIRE RISK

- Enforce a **no smoking** policy in your warehouse
- Ensure charging zones are well maintained and do not represent a fire hazard
- Cage all lighting to prevent red hot splinters of glass dropping onto cargo if a bulb fails
- Install, maintain and test adequate fire detection and suppression systems
- Work with local emergency services and establish response times



EQUIPMENT/PROPERTY

- Check and service forklifts regularly
- Protect racking from forklift impact
- Establish a robust defect reporting and repair procedure
- Ensure there is adequate ventilation
- Implement regular maintenance inspections
- Ensure lighting is adequate
- Inspect and maintain roofs to avoid water ingress or structural failure
- Install appropriate auxiliary back up power source
- Assess the risk of flooding and establish a flood response plan if necessary (e.g. flood barriers)



OPERATIONAL

- Ensure any high value or hazardous cargoes are stored and secured correctly
- Know your customer and understand cargo-related risks
- Proactively manage any abandoned or stagnated stock
- Manage idle pallet stocks
- Maintain good housekeeping practices



Conduct regular inspections to check for:

- correct application and use
- loads within allowable safe limits
- accidental damage or dislodgement of structure components

REPORT ALL DAMAGE TO PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR SITE MANAGEMENT

REPORT ALL ACCIDENTS

Do not alter the structure without either:

- checking effects against manufacturer's technical data
- obtaining approval from supplier

DO NOT CLIMB ON SHELVING OR RACKING

REFER TO SEMA CODE OF PRACTICE

IF IN DOUBT ALWAYS CONTACT THE SUPPLIER