Load Securement – Securing Pallets Meeting Kit



WHAT□S AT STAKE

Loading a pallet is a physical process that works with the laws of gravity and friction. Heavier items should be placed on the bottom with the lighter ones gradually stacked on top until the load is complete or the pallet□s capacity is achieved. Once the pallet is full, it□s ready to be shipped.

WHAT□S THE DANGER

IMPROPER PALLET LOADING AND SECURING

Packaging and shipping companies that do not master the art of pallet loading and securing experience few lost or damaged goods. They have many accidents. They lose time due to employee injuries like musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and cut hands or crushed feet that are commonly associated with improperly secured loads. These preventable incidents cause unnecessary increases in downtime and worker compensation claims. They also contribute to poor workplace morale that spirals into more accidents.

OTHER DANGERS WHEN WORKING WITH PALLETS

Overloaded Timber Pallets. When timber pallets are overloaded, the structural integrity of the pallet can be compromised. This means the pallet may:

- Crack and fold in the middle, possibly resulting in objects falling on somebody or getting damaged.
- Splinter, causing pain to those handling the pallets without correct PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

Handling Pallets from Above Shoulder Height. Handling items above shoulder height can strain your body, particularly your back. Many injuries occur from employees trying to lift an overloaded pallet or straining themselves by not utilising correct lifting techniques.

Physical Injury from Falling Timber Pallets. If pallets are stored incorrectly, they present a risk to those working with (and around) them.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

BEST SAFETY PRACTICES IN PALLET LOADING OPERATIONS

Cover the Entire Pallet. Covering the pallet□s whole surface is especially important when loading the bottom of the pallet. An uneven bottom layer allows products to shift and fall off, resulting in damage.

Ensure Pallets Are in Good Shape. Before loading a pallet, ensure the pallet is the right size and strength to support the load. Check for cracks, loose boards, protruding fasteners, and any other signs of deterioration. If the pallet is damaged, discard it and use one in better shape.

Load Pallets Evenly. An evenly stacked pallet provides greater balance, stability, and strength to the whole stack. Stacking evenly also reduces the pallet□s likelihood of falling during shipping or in the warehouse. Ensure you distribute your loads evenly on the pallets to efficiently use space and reduce the chances of a pallet stack falling over.

Check for Gaps. Eliminate gaps in a pallet load for enhanced security. If a pallet moves too much during shipping or handling, items can fall into openings on the stack. An appropriately secured pallet will fit tightly and move as a single unit. Check for gaps as you load each pallet.

Place Heavier Items on Bottom. Pack your pallets so that they taper inward as they rise. Placing sturdier, heavier items at the bottom will keep the pallet□s center of gravity closer to the ground, preventing the pallet from falling and products from settling. Pack more delicate items toward the top to protect them from being damaged by heavier products.

Follow a Stacking Pattern. While loading a pallet can require some creative stacking, you should always follow a stacking pattern when you load items. Fitting products together in a fixed way helps increase the load□s stability and balance. This practice can also improve warehouse safety by eliminating over-hanging edges and uneven weight distribution.

Stack Your Pallets Upright. Stacking pallets on their sides can weaken their structure, causing them to splinter.

Ensure Proper Binding to the Pallet. Binding the products to the pallet is essential for securing loads on pallets. Attach the entire load down to the bottom of the pallet to bind it to its foundation.

TRAINING

Making sure you and your employees are up to date with the most current safety practices will minimise any potential injuries in the workplace. Provide extensive advice on things like:

- Health and safety solutions for handling pallets above shoulder height
- Loading and unloading pallets using different technologies
- Pallet racking operation and maintenance

Every employee should know and understand the load bearings of pallets and pallet storage racks.

Provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Protective gloves to prevent splinters.
- Protective gloves with enhanced palm grips so pallets don’t slip.
- Safety footwear to protect feet if objects do fall.
- High-vis vests so employees are visible to each other, even from high above.

Pallet Safety Takeaways

- Inspect every pallet for any defects such as loose nails, splinters, cracks, or weaknesses. Discard or repair any pallet that is not in good working order.
- When not in use, properly store pallets, stacking them in flat, stable piles no higher than 4 feet.
- Make sure pallets are loaded with even weight distribution, and do not exceed maximum weight capacity.
- Keep pallets clear of areas that may need to be accessed, such as doorways, emergency exits, etc.
- Do not drop or bang pallets.
- Be cautious when lifting use two employees for heavy loads to reduce the risk of strain.
- Avoid walking over pallets.

FINAL WORD

Millions of loads slide off their pallets during shipment each year, resulting in billions of dollars of damage and waste. These loads start their shipment journeys by being stretch wrapped, a process that s supposed to prevent this problem.