CrewSigned

Loading Dock Safety Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

The loading dock is where trucks, trailers, forklifts and people all come together, often in a hurry. Some of the worst injuries in warehouses happen here: a forklift goes off the edge of the dock, a trailer pulls away while a forklift is inside, a dock plate slips, or someone gets pinned between a truck and the dock.

The biggest danger is trailer creep and early departure. Every time a forklift drives in and out, the trailer gets pushed and can slowly move away from the dock. And sometimes a driver pulls away before loading is done. Before anyone goes into a trailer, the truck's brakes must be set and the wheels chocked, or the trailer locked to the dock with a vehicle restraint. Check it yourself. Use the dock lights or signals we have, and do not let a driver leave until the loader says it is clear.

Look at the trailer before you drive in. Check the floor for holes, rot and weak spots, and make sure it can hold the forklift and the load. If the trailer is not attached to a tractor, put a jack stand under the front so it cannot tip.

Dock plates and dockboards have to be strong enough for the load and secured so they cannot slide. Check them before each use. Drive across slowly and straight. Never jump a gap.

Dock edges are a fall hazard. An open dock door with no trailer is a drop of four feet or more. Keep doors closed or chained when no trailer is there, and keep the edge marked. Do not back up to the edge on foot while pulling a pallet jack. Forklift operators, keep a safe distance from the edge and never turn near it.

People on foot need to stay out of forklift paths and out from behind trucks that are backing in. Never stand between a backing truck and the dock. Truck drivers should wait in a safe area, not on the dock, while their trailer is worked.

Keep the dock clean and dry. Ice, rain, oil and debris make it slippery for feet and forklift tires alike. Good lighting inside trailers matters too.

A few extra seconds checking chocks and plates can save a life.

Discussion questions

1. How do we know a trailer is chocked or locked in before a forklift goes in?
2. Which dock edge here is open when no trailer is parked, and how do we guard it?
3. What do you check on a dock plate before you drive across it?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1910.26, Dockboards
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.26

SOURCES

29 CFR 1910.178, Powered industrial trucks: https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.178
OSHA Warehousing: https://www.osha.gov/warehousing

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Loading Dock Safety Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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