

# Toolbox

## Safety Series



### WAREHOUSE SAFETY

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Whether in a free-standing facility or an adjunct to a manufacturing operation, you should be aware of the hazards affecting warehousing employees.

Safety concerns for production facilities with warehouses include conveyors, manual material handling, fire safety, chemical exposure, lockout/tagout, powered industrial trucks, housekeeping, air emissions, noise and ergonomics. Additional hazards found in warehousing include loading docks, material storage, fire safety and charging stations.

Several problems exist that affect the safe storage of materials. These include bad pallets, damaged racks, irregular dimensions, inadequate space, load limits of racks and mezzanines, lack of spacing between back-to-back racks and insufficient guarding on mezzanine.

Powered industrial trucks are vital to most warehouse operations. They pose great risk for endangering associates, property and products if operated improperly. That's why only those employees who are trained and authorized by the employer may become operators.

In addition, potential causes exist that can lead to injuries from manual handling of materials. These include lifting, back sprains and strains, and hand injuries. The personal protective equipment (PPE) you wear will vary depending on what hazards are present. Proper PPE may include hard hats, safety shoes, gloves, aprons, eye and face protection, and hearing protection.

In addition, slips, trips and falls are a major source of injuries throughout any warehouse. Things that can cause a slip, trip or fall include:

- ▶ Cords, hoses and banding material;
- ▶ Carrying material with blocked vision;
- ▶ Leaking containers, spilled liquids or slippery material;
- ▶ Rain, snow or ice;
- ▶ Paper;
- ▶ Broken pallets;
- ▶ Unguarded openings on elevated work platforms or levels;
- ▶ Lack of safety harness when working in overhead racks;
- ▶ Uneven floors, lack of handrails, floor holes;
- ▶ Insufficient lighting.

