

Does Your Material Handling Systems Integrator Have a Comprehensive Safety Plan?

Material handling operations are carried out in most industrial facilities. Industrial and manufacturing workplaces are at risk for workplace injuries because each handling task poses unique demands on a worker.

Some of the most common material handling hazards:

1. Poor floor or lot conditions
2. Loads beyond rated capacity of the forklifts
3. Missing or non-functioning safety devices – such as horns, seatbelts, alarms, strobes, and harnesses
4. Poorly stacked or stored loads and structurally damaged storage racks
5. Damaged or broken pallets
6. Lack of proper pre-shift checks and preventative maintenance
7. Lack of enforcement for any type of safety issue

If items are moved, handled, or stored, manually or mechanically, proper workplace practices and training should be included in your workplace safety program. Any workplace can help workers to perform tasks safely and easily by implementing and upholding proper safety policies and procedures.

Most workplace inspections are done by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), a federal agency tasked with setting and enforcing safety standards, or by state agencies approved by OSHA. The safety standards are based on the regulations respecting industrial establishments (O.Reg. 851/90), made under the Occupational and Safety Act. The section(s) that refer to material handling include section(s) 45-66. OSHA is dedicated to keeping people safe in the workplace. Their regulations and guidelines must be followed by employees all over the country in all types of work situations. OSHA's main goal is to eliminate work related illnesses and injuries. Although it is required that you work according to OSHA's guidelines, there are still thousands of workplaces that are fined each year for not complying with the set standards. Three of the most common OSHA citations occur within the realm of material handling operations.

- Fall Protection – OSHA requires that any person working at a height of four feet or more must wear a safety harness. While it may seem unnecessary at such a low height, studies have proven that four feet is high enough to cause permanent damage to your body. Any person that is required to work in any area that is elevated should always wear a protective safety harness.
- Scaffolding – Violations regarding scaffolding are extremely common. Scaffolding that is put together poorly could fall apart and cause serious injuries to anyone on or near them at the time. Scaffolding should only be put together by trained employees and checked over before you allow even one person to begin working on it. Too often, workers are in a rush to get the scaffolding up and they miss a piece or overlook something they should have done to ensure everyone's safety.

- Powered Industrial Trucks – Accidents can occur when these trucks are being loaded and unloaded. If the workers utilizing this equipment are not properly trained in lifting safely, or how to use forklift trucks, there can be a large number of accidents. Another common citation is being hit by a moving truck. Either the person driving the forklift was not paying attention or the person walking did not look before they walked. Either way, this is a common citation that should never occur.

PeakLogix excels as a material handling integrator and we take safety seriously. PeakLogix has a comprehensive workplace safety program that encourages all of our employees or subcontractors that work on a clients' jobsite have each of the following criteria:

Certification per employee:

- Forklift certification
- Scissor lift certification
- OSHA-30 card (for supervisors) and OSHA-10 card for all others
- First Aid certification
- Training certification for the following programs:
 - Electrical Safety
 - Lockout/Tagout
 - Powered Industrial Truck
 - Scaffolding
 - Fire Protection Extinguisher
 - Ladder Safety
 - Personal Protective Equipment
 - Ariel Lift

PeakLogix' provides safety leadership to our employees with a comprehensive safety program intolerant of unsafe behaviors on the job. The safety culture within our organization ensures that all of our employees are concerned with safety awareness, because safety training is the key element to the prevention of work-related injuries, illnesses and death. Personal ownership and accountability for workplace safety encourages our employees to look out for themselves and each other.

If you are considering a material handling systems project in the future, be sure to utilize an integrator with a comprehensive safety program. Companies are legally required to provide the safety training mandated for their industry by OSHA. Maintaining records that detail course completion rates and certification status of employees is crucial because it helps pinpoint the safety training that still needs to be addressed. Documenting safety training progress also helps companies demonstrate compliance of OSHA's regulations, which goes a long way in avoiding fines and noncompliance lawsuits.

To learn more about PeakLogix' Safety Program contact our safety director, Jerry Shaw at:

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