



Facility Safety

5 Hidden Hazards in Your Workplace

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Warehouses can be a maze of potential disasters for an unsafe work environment. Making use of security training programs and safety signs can help eliminate most of the issues before they arise, but as with every worksite, some dangers will remain hidden.

1. Docks

Other than a steep fall for those who don't watch where they're walking, docks can be dangerous hazards for forklifts. **Nearly 100 employees are killed every year** due to forklifts according to OSHA, and docks can provide the avenue for disaster.

Make sure to mark docks with bright yellow labeling and the proper accompanying signage. Avoid backing up forklifts to the very edge of the dock, and also check to make sure the forklift can steadily and safely carry the load.

2. Conveyors

Conveyors seem simple in nature, but conceal the danger they pose through their monotonous procedure. These heavy mechanical systems can pose hazards like pinch points, putting the worker in a vulnerable position for falling products and musculoskeletal disorders that arise because of repetitive positions.

Make sure that every pinch point on a conveyor belt is inspected and guarded, and that the system as a

whole is maintained on a daily or weekly basis, depending on the amount of work it regularly receives, OSHA points out. Providing adequate lighting in these areas can also help prevent accidents.

3. Hazardous hazards

The most hidden danger in a warehouse could perhaps be hazardous material. Companies without safety procedures, faulty personal protective equipment (PPE), or clearly identified wash stations can become liable for injuries that occur to their employees on the job.

To avoid injuries occurring from hazardous material, make sure to follow these steps:

- Provide a **Safety Data Sheet (SDS)** for every chemical workers come in contact with.
- Dispense spill cleanup kits around the warehouse, and train employees in using them.
- Administer PPE to employees and train them on the risks that come with working with chemicals.
- Keep chemicals away from common forklift areas.

Hazardous material is no joke, and workers need to be prepared for an injury that can come without the sight of blood.

4. Charging stations

Electric lines and open sockets can spark fires that lead to explosions. Careless workers with little safety training can spell disaster for warehouses with a large amount of flammable equipment.

Avoid potential disaster by prohibiting smoking near these stations and providing considerable ventilation consistently throughout the warehouse, according to OSHA. Make sure to place **Class C fire extinguishers** near as many outlets as possible in case the worst occurs. When refueling forklifts, make sure that brakes are applied and that they are properly positioned.

5. Racking system

These colossal shelves of metal can come crashing down in an instant, crushing anyone unlucky enough to be caught underneath. Just a simple **forklift bump** can send the racking system crumbling down, according to the Ontario Ministry of Labour.

Avoid forklift accidents, and falling product, by providing forklift training and posting safety signs. Limiting the exposure workers have to these racks can help reduce the risk as well.

Dangers aren't always visible in the warehouse, but taking steps to prevent them from arising can help to quell concerns.

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