

EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

October 2018

Backing up a tractor-trailer

Drivers of tractor-trailers are trained operators and among the most skilled drivers on the road. But having to meet deadlines, fatigue, and other challenges that come with the job can lead to bad judgment, accidents, injury, and death. To avoid fatalities, follow Get Out and Look (GOAL) safety measures when backing up a tractor-trailer:

- Never back your vehicle when someone is riding the rear step.
- Determine if the space is wide enough.
- Use your four-way flasher and backup alarm if the vehicle is equipped with these. Periodically tap the horn before backing and as backing continues.
- Check for any awnings, pipes, framing, fire escapes, wires, etc., that may be in your way.
- Check that the entire path the vehicle will take is clear of obstacles.
- Use a guide or spotter if possible.
- Start backing within a few seconds after your check. If you must spot without a guide, return to the vehicle quickly so that there is very little time for people or obstacles to move behind the vehicle.
- When appropriate, blow the horn to warn everyone that you are going to back up.
- Back up slowly and cautiously, and remain in complete control of your vehicle. Use the lowest-possible gear or idle speed, and do not accelerate.



"Hi, Susan. Would you happen to know: How much wood could a woodchuck hand-truck if a woodchuck hand-trucked wood?"

Using hand trucks safely

Safe practices for working with hand trucks

Hand trucks are simple pieces of equipment that can be extremely helpful when moving boxes and other heavy objects. Proper use of a hand truck can help prevent strains, sprains, and other lifting-related injuries. However, hand trucks are not without hazards of their own, so use them carefully, and follow safe work practices.

Inspecting

Before you use a hand truck, inspect it. If it has air-filled tires, check that the air pressure is correct; if it has hard rubber tires, make sure they are in good condition. Examine the frame for broken or bent areas, and check for any loose or damaged bolts or other parts. Wheels should turn easily; if the hand truck is equipped with brakes, make sure they work.

Loading

When you load the hand truck, always place heavier objects or boxes on the bottom of the stack, with lighter objects on top. Check the rated weight capacity of the hand truck, and don't go over it. Don't load the hand truck with more weight than you can safely manage, even if the equipment can handle it. Never stack items so high that you cannot see over the top. If the load is not stable, secure it to the hand truck with a strap.

Safe use

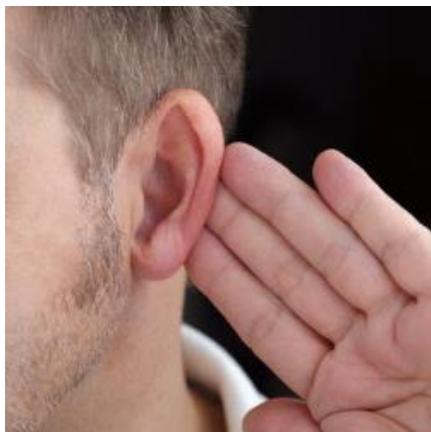
Follow these safe practices for using a hand truck:

- Get a firm grip on the handle. Wear work gloves with slip-resistant coatings. Do not operate hand trucks when your hands or the handles are wet or greasy.
- Maintain good back posture by keeping your back straight and bending your knees. Push the hand truck rather than pull it whenever possible, and do not walk backward.
- Allow the hand truck to carry the weight so that you only need to push and steer. Two-wheeled hand trucks should be tilted back just enough so that the weight is balanced on the wheels. Tilting back too far will require you to support too much of the load.
- Travel at a safe speed to avoid obstacles such as debris, wet floors, or uneven floors. Maintain the speed required to keep the hand truck under control. Keep an eye out for other vehicles, equipment or structures, edges of docks, trip hazards, pedestrians, etc.
- When operating on a ramp or inclined surface, keep the load downhill if possible. This will prevent the load from rolling over or falling on top of you if you lose control. However, avoid using hand trucks on very steep inclines.
- Keep your feet clear of the wheels when using hand trucks.
- Do not ride on a hand truck, and never carry a passenger.
- Protect your hands from being crushed against solid objects. Watch for pinch points when you go through doorways or other tight areas.
- Park hand trucks in appropriate places. Keep them out of main walkways, and do not block emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers or exits.

Working around forklifts

Even when not driving a forklift, it's important for you to understand how to stay safe when working around or near a forklift. Follow these safety tips when working near forklifts:

- Always be alert for forklift activity in your work area, and keep track of where forklifts are and what they are doing at all times.
- Avoid getting too close to forklifts while you work.
- Listen for horns, backup alarms, and other warnings.
- Look both ways before crossing aisles and obey traffic signs.
- Use pedestrian walkways, and remain behind barriers when available.
- Don't assume that forklift operators will always see you.
- Wear high-visibility clothing when working around forklifts.
- Take extra care in noisy work areas where you might not hear forklift horns, backup alarms, and other warnings.
- Never try to "beat" a forklift or try to slip by a moving forklift.
- Obey safety rules and never hitch a ride on a forklift or ride on the forks.
- Avoid walking or standing under raised forks even if they're empty.
- Avoid standing where you could be crushed between a forklift and a structure, like a wall, column, storage rack, or piece of equipment.
- Refrain from engaging in horseplay when working around forklifts and don't distract forklift operators.



Using hand trucks safely: Quiz

1. If you are able to push the hand truck, you do not need to inspect it. **True or False**
2. You should place heavier objects or boxes on the bottom of the stack on hand trucks. **True or False**
3. When using a hand truck, you should:
 - A. Maintain good back posture by keeping your back straight and bending your knees.
 - B. Run or walk fast with the hand truck to handle tasks more efficiently.
 - C. Always keep the load uphill from you when operating on a ramp or inclined surface.
4. You should stack the items as high as you need to. **True or False**
5. You should park your hand truck in the middle of aisles so that you know where it is. **True or False**

Answers

1. False. You must inspect the hand truck before you use it. Check the tires is correct, examine the frame, and check for any loose or damaged parts. **2. True.** Place heavier objects or boxes on the bottom of the stack and lighter objects on top when loading a hand truck. **3. A. Maintain good back posture** by keeping your back straight and bending your knees. Travel at a safe speed and keep the load downhill if possible when operating on a ramp or inclined surface. **4. False.** Never stack items so high that you cannot see over the top. Also, make sure to secure the load to the hand truck if it is not stable. **5. False.** Don't park your hand truck in main walkways, and do not block emergency equipment, such as fire extinguishers or exits.

Hearing injuries...from chemicals?

This month is National Protect Your Hearing Month. Did you know that hearing impairment can be caused by exposure both to noise and to chemicals? The impairment from either of those two exposures can be worse if there is exposure to both. Damage to hearing from chemicals is called ototoxicity. The chemicals in question are called ototoxicants. Industries that use potential ototoxicants include manufacturing, mining, utilities, construction, and agriculture. The many ototoxicants include pharmaceuticals, solvents, asphyxiants, nitriles, and metals and compounds.

Ototoxicants affect central portions of the auditory system. The effects include both loss of hearing and loss of clarity. Specifically, speech discrimination dysfunction—the ability to hear voices separately from background noise—may occur and involve compressed loudness (sound distortion). The following are some things you can do to protect yourself :

- Know that the chemicals are present in the workplace. Review the safety data sheets (SDSs) for ototoxic substances and/or chemicals.
- Ask a supervisor if it's possible to replace a hazardous chemical with a less toxic chemical.
- Use engineering controls, like isolation and enclosures, to control exposure to ototoxicants and noise.
- Talk to your supervisor to see what unnecessary tasks that cause noise or ototoxicant exposure can be avoided.
- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment assigned by your employer, including hearing protection and hand protection. Wearing chemical-protective gloves, arm sleeves, aprons, and other appropriate clothing can assist in reducing dermal exposure, as many ototoxic substances can be absorbed through the skin.