

# TOOL BOX TALKS

## Pallet Jack Safety

Anywhere there is a pallet, you can bet a pallet jack was used to move it. Almost all warehouses, manufacturers and big-box stores use pallet jacks. For about \$500, a company can purchase a good-quality pallet jack. These jacks can lift 5,000 pounds or more easily. However – is 5,000 pounds a safe load to move? Does this load affect shoulders, wrists and the back? Take a look at the following safety tips for using pallet jacks safely:

### WORKSAFE TIPS

#### PALLET JACK SAFETY CONCERNS

- Load dropped on foot.
- Strain or dislocation of shoulder due to forceful pulling of a pallet jack.
- Strains from moving a loaded pallet jack.
- Trips from exposed pallet jack “forks.”

#### PALLET JACK TRAINING

- Know the load capacity.
- Know the following handle positions:
  - Raise position
  - Neutral position
  - Lower position
- Be familiar with ramps, narrow aisles or floor obstructions that could cause an incident.
- Clean up wet floors – could cause a slip and fall while pushing a pallet jack.

#### HANDLING WOODEN PALLETS

- Wooden pallets can weigh 30-40 lbs.
- Always wear gloves when handling pallets.
- Never stand on pallets or use as a work platform.
- Never stand a pallet on end.
- When a pallet is emptied, remove it immediately.
- An empty or unloaded pallet is a trip hazard.
- Do not stage pallets at the end of aisles or around corners – avoid creating a trip hazard.
- Store stacks or excess pallets outside – they are a fire hazard.
- Tarp or protect pallets stored outdoors from water, as water-soaked pallets can weigh 50 or more pounds.

#### BEST PRACTICES

- Report damaged or worn pallet jacks.
- Report pallet jacks that have flat spots in wheels or that will not roll well.
- Report pallet jacks with a failing hydraulic unit.
- Never overload the pallet jack load capacity.
- Only PUSH pallet jacks.
- NEVER PULL pallet jacks—places major strain on shoulders – rotator cuff injury could result!
- Start the pallet jack slowly – no shoving.
- Never yank or throw the pallet jack handle.
- NEVER ride a pallet jack for fun.
- Never stand on a pallet jack.
- Unused pallet jacks are a major trip hazard.
- When not in use, pallet jacks must be rolled into an area that does not have pedestrian traffic.
  - Under a shelf or pallet rack
  - In a pallet or under a table
- Keep your heels safe! Move the jack slowly!
- Do not brace or stop a pallet jack with the foot!
- When moving a pallet jack & load, keep the jack control handle in the “neutral” position.
- Keep your feet out from beneath the load.
- Lower load before working around a pallet jack.
- Never leave a pallet jack with the load elevated.
- Keep the pallet jack in front of you when descending a ramp.
- Wear gloves when handling pallets.
- When a pallet jack is stuck in a pallet, push down on the handle until the front fork wheels come up slightly, and then pull the jack out of the pallet.
- Stack the pallet load so it will not shift or turn over – the handle can “whip” when the jack turns over – resulting in injury.



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888.499.SAFE (7233)