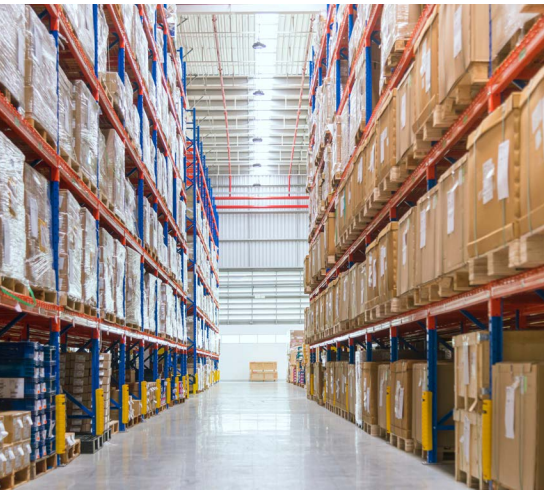
Allianz

BUSINESS RISK SUPPORT

Storage racking



Each year there are numerous accidents involving racking in workplaces, resulting in property damage, serious injury and, in some cases, death.

The importance of workers' responsibilities regarding health and safety around storage racking systems needs to be properly communicated and recognised, with support and a clear commitment from senior management.

The main causes of storage racking accidents include:

- incorrect installation;
- instability;
- impact; and
- a lack, or poor quality, of inspections and maintenance.

Key actions to avoid accidents due to storage racking

- Get competent people to install the racking, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Erect racking on durable, level floors that are capable of withstanding the point loading at each base plate.
- Use only those building members which have been 'proved' by structural calculations to be suitable where the design of the racking requires it to be secured to the building.
- Fix racking securely to the floor, where necessary. For example, where lift truck or other mechanical handling equipment is used.
- Make sure beam connector locks are securely fixed at the ends of each beam.
- Attach a clear notice to racking, stating its maximum load, together with any necessary specified load configurations.
  - The limitations indicated in the maximum load notice should never be exceeded.
- Don't ever alter racking, for example by welding, or remove components without first consulting the manufacturer. Before changing the position of adjustable components supplied on racking, the employer should establish the design limitations of the new configuration and, where necessary, amend the safe working load.

- Protect racking appropriately, if it's likely to be struck by lift trucks and other vehicles. Use renewable column guides or guide rails to prevent trucks getting too close. Corner uprights are especially at risk and should be carefully protected and painted a noticeable colour.

- Carry out regular planned inspections to identify and determine the extent of any racking damage and if any remedial action needs to be taken. Three types of inspection should be undertaken:
  - immediate reporting of damage and defects;
  - visual inspections at regular intervals; and
  - 'expert' inspections carried out at appropriate intervals by a competent person.

- Encourage staff to report any damage, however minor, so it can be assessed.

- Check the contents of the maximum load notice are strictly adhered to.

- Contact the racking manufacturer for advice if there is any uncertainty as to the integrity of the racking system.

- Keep a log book for recording inspections, damage and repairs.
  - Where damage is identified that affects the safety of the racking system, the racking should be offloaded and controls introduced to prevent it being used until remedial repair work has been carried out.

- Control access to the racking or shelving and don't allow climbing and similarly hazardous actions on and around the installation.

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