

In the Safety Zone™

A newsletter dedicated to safety awareness

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Yard Safety

While truck drivers are most in tune with the safe operation of trucks on the roads and highways, the safety of yard trucks should not be overlooked. Yard trucks are often operated in confined areas with pedestrians nearby. There are often many yard trucks in operation at once. The combination of these factors can make the work environment very dangerous. Awareness is the key to the prevention of accidents and injuries.



The People Factor



The most common hazard in the operation of yard trucks is the danger of collision with other workers on foot. A driver/hostler must be highly aware the presence of workers on foot at all times and they must also ***be aware of you!*** In addition to safety equipment, many companies use a “buddy system” so that work-

ers are constantly looking out for each other or establish safe zones in which to operate vehicles and equipment. In addition to general safety training, it is important that drivers are trained in accordance with the company’s specific guidelines for yard safety.

General Safety

Applying some tried-and-true basic safety habits always helps minimize the risk of accident or injury. Always remember to:

- **Complete a pre-inspection of the yard truck.** Head and tail lights and emergency flashers should be in working condition at all times so that you are visible to other workers at all times.
- **Wear your seatbelt!** Seatbelts save lives—even in trailer yards!
- **Obey all posted speed limits.** Never operate the vehicle above the posted speed limit. Be prepared to slow to a stop if necessary.
- **Always wear the proper Personal Protective Equipment to increase your visibility to others.**
- **Pay attention at all times.** You should always be looking out for potential hazards when operating yard vehicles and equipment.
- **Never pull behind someone who is backing in to an area.** Always give them extra room and the right of way.

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Vehicle Operations-Another Key Component to Yard Safety

The safe operation of vehicles is another critical component to yard safety. Moving trailers for loading and unloading in a timely manner is of utmost importance to a company's operation. Let's review some procedures that help to ensure safe, efficient equipment operation.



Chocking

It is the responsibility of every hostler or driver to chock any trailer that he/she sets into a dock. You should notify a Yard Supervisor immediately if chocks have not been provided. You should then proceed to slide and lock tandems to the rear of the trailer *prior* to placement in a dock.



Coupling/Uncoupling

Coupling and uncoupling are skills basic to tractor/trailer operations. The consequences of improper coupling can result in driver injury and damage to equipment. Be careful and take your time to safely complete the process.

Failure to secure swing doors and follow safety protocols for pulling away from dock areas are the most frequent causes of trailer damage in yards. You can avoid trailer damage by doing the following:

Swing Door Operation

- Swing doors should be completely closed and locked at all times when a vehicle is in transit.
- Doors should only be opened after the trailer is aligned with a dock and the engine is cut off.
- Once opened, doors should be secured with assembly to prevent movement.
- Follow the rules for pulling a trailer when allowing for clearance to close swing doors.

Pulling Trailers from Docks

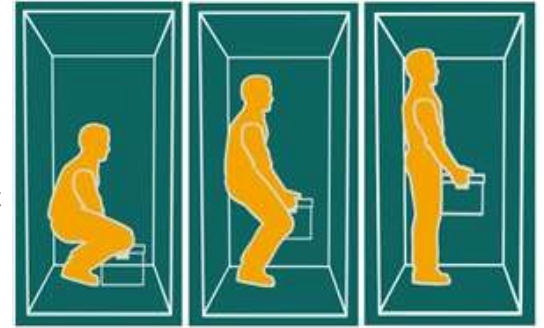
- Confirm that trailer is actually ready to be to be moved. The trailer should be hooked up and secure the tractor.
- Ensure that dock plate has been removed
- Pull chocks from the wheels
- Pull trailer from the dock immediately

When it comes to pulling out trailers, drivers are the last line of defense. Remember to make it your G.O.A.L-Get Out And Look to ensure that trailers can be safely moved from the dock areas.

Lift Safely and protect the health of your back!

Why is it so important to lift properly? Many back injuries happen while attempting to lift or manually move loads. Improper lifting is the major cause of back injuries both on and off the job. Workers lose an average of seven workdays a year because of back injuries. It also affects quality of life.

Here are some key guidelines for lifting:



- **Plan the lift in advance.** Know the load's weight (call for help when it's too heavy for one person), plan the route to the new location to avoid obstacles, and be sure there's room to place the load when you get there. The shortest route may not be the best route. Also be sure the object does not block your visibility while carrying it. And if you need to move it off a high shelf, get a stepstool. Never try to remove a heavy object by stretching your arms out over your head.
- **Lift with your legs, not your back!** Use proper body mechanics in lifting. That means letting your legs, not your back, do the work. Stand feet apart, close to the load, bend the knees, grasp the object close to the body, and lift upwards from the legs and buttocks. Never simply bend over to start a lift.
- **Unload properly.** Face the spot you've chosen and lower the load slowly, again bending your knees while keeping your back straight, until the weight of the load rests on the ground. Then slide it into its final location.

Beat the Heat!



The summer season is upon us again! While you can't avoid working in the extreme heat all the time, you can take measures to keep your body cool and hydrated. These tips can help you beat the heat:

1. Drink plenty of water.
2. Wear light-colored loose fitting clothing to reflect the sun's rays
3. Protect your eyes by wearing sun glasses while driving.
4. Incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into your diet. They help to retain water and won't fill you up.

It is also important that you recognize danger signs of the common summer hazards that drivers can be exposed to:

Heat stress. This common reaction to high temperatures, especially when accompanied by strenuous activity, can result in thirst, tiredness, dizziness, and even difficulty seeing. Such symptoms suggest it's time to drink some cool water or even Gatorade (this drink helps to replace electrolytes the body loses by sweating).

Heat cramps. These painful muscle spasms in arms, legs, or intestines are caused by losing salt while sweating. Cooling down and drinking water or Gatorade can help to alleviate these symptoms as well.

Heat exhaustion. A person suffering from this common response to strenuous activity in the heat is likely to feel weak and possibly dizzy and/or nauseous. You may have chills, clammy skin, and profuse sweating. If these symptoms occur, you should get to a cool spot, elevate your feet slightly, drink fluids and rest.