

Loading/Unloading Trailers: Manual Pallet Jack Safety

Pallet jacks seem like simple devices and do not appear to require training. Always read and follow the safety rules in the manual. Before moving loads, first demonstrate safe operating procedures with an electric or manual pallet jack. Ensure all safety measures are being taken when loading or unloading trailers at loading docks.

- Always inspect manual pallet jacks prior to each use to ensure it is in good working order.
- Wear proper foot protection and gloves; do not place any body parts under a pallet at any time.
- Always use both forks for lifting a load.
- Center the forks under a load to ensure even balance and stability of the load.
- Always try to push a load rather than pull; pulling instead of pushing can cause back strain on the body.
- Try to avoid inclines but always be uphill of the load on an incline.
- Never raise a load higher than needed. Loads shall be kept as close to the ground as possible for transport.
- When using a manual pallet jack for loading trailers, ensure the trailer is secure with either wheel chocks or a dock lock.
- Always inspect the trailer's landing gear and place trailer stabilizing jack stands under trailers that are spotted at a dock.
- Ensure all trailer landing gear is down and secure prior to loading/unloading a trailer.
- Always use dock plates, boards or levelers when loading/unloading trailers. Ensure they are in place, secure, and that they are designed for the intended load prior to loading/unloading.
- Always inspect the floors of trailers and trucks before a forklift or manual pallet jack is driven onto them.
- Ensure loading docks are properly marked and all emergency equipment is not blocked and easily accessible.
- Clean out docking areas to ensure there is no accumulation of debris.
- Never jump down from a loading dock, this can lead to serious ankle, knee and back injuries.
- Provide a dock seal or dock shelter to keep rain and snow off loading docks which can cause slippery surfaces.
- Protect pedestrians or other employees by ensuring that they are aware that forklifts/pallet jacks are being used in loading dock areas.

