



PENNSYLVANIA LUMBERMENS MUTUAL  
INSURANCE COMPANY

# VEHICLE UNLOADING GUIDELINE

Truck unloading is a daily activity in many businesses. It is also a regular source of injuries to the driver, workers and visitors. At PLM we have had numerous losses caused by improper unloading practices. Employers have a responsibility to ensure they maintain a safe working environment. Forklift operators are also responsible for the safety of others in the unloading area. This guideline should be used to help management establish safe work procedures as it relates to vehicle unloading.

## ESTABLISH AN UNLOADING AREA:

- Area should be level to help maintain stability of the truck and trailer. The ground should be free of potholes and debris.
- Area should be free of overhead electric lines.
- Area should be clear of other traffic -- vehicles or foot. Pedestrians, the truck driver, or others employees not involved in the unloading process should be clear of the area.
- Area should have sufficient lighting for early morning or evening unloading.
- If possible, the designated area should be a one-way route to prevent the need for vehicles to back up. If a driver is required to back the vehicle, a spotter should be used to protect pedestrians and property.

## GUIDELINES FOR TRUCK DRIVERS:

- After checking into the office, the driver should proceed to the designated area and remove tarps, straps, or other load securement devices. Secure this material so it is not an obstruction to the forklift operator during the unloading process.
- Driver should secure vehicle, apply brakes, and turn off engine, as appropriate, to prevent unsafe movement during the unloading operation.
- Driver should proceed to a designated area (safe zone) located away from the truck and outside of the unloading area. The driver should remain in that area during the unloading operation.
- **NO** material should be unloaded nor should any forklifts be operating in the area around the truck until the driver has completed all of the tasks above and moved to the designated safe zone.

## GUIDELINES FOR FORKLIFT OPERATORS:

- Operating a forklift should be limited to individuals who are trained and qualified to do so, including general forklift safety topics and equipment specific training. Initial training should be completed prior to authorization of the driver to operate the forklift. Refresher training should be completed every three years and following any forklift-related accident, property damage, or near-miss incident.
- Have a clear understanding of the material being unloaded; unloading a bunk of 2x4 is different from unloading laminated beams or a pallet of roof shingles.
- Check the load -- Make sure that the load has not shifted, banding is still in place, and the overall load is in good condition and not likely to move or fall during the unloading process.
- No one, including other workers, should be on the opposite side of a truck from a forklift while it is unloading material.
- **EMPOWER** your forklift driver to stop the unloading process if the location of the truck driver cannot be confirmed or someone else enters the unloading zone.

While unloading of material is an everyday activity at most operations, safety cannot be taken for granted. It is management's responsibility to ensure that proper training and safe unloading procedures are in place and enforced.

NOTE: These guidelines should also be used for loading operations.

The following pages are a sample checklist that you can utilize to address loading/unloading exposures.

## UNLOADING/LOADING CHECKLIST

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Vehicle D.O.T # \_\_\_\_\_

Loading Area \_\_\_\_\_ Trucking Co. \_\_\_\_\_

### General

		YES	NO
1	Is the truck/trailer correctly positioned and level?		
2	Are wheel chocks in place?		
3	Is there any damage to the truck or trailer?		
4	Are the appropriate people and equipment available for loading/unloading?		
5	Does product require special lifts or a crane to handle the load?		
6	Are load straps in good condition (not frayed, worn or torn)?		

### Unloading

		YES	NO
1	Has any freight moved while in transit?		
2	Are all items effectively secured to a pallet, cradle or flatbed trailer?		
3	Are top loaded items stable?		

4	Could any freight move or become unstable when the load restraints are removed?		
5	Has the driver been moved to the company safety zone?		
6	Are all helpers in sight of the forklift/crane operator?		

### Loading

		YES	NO
1	Has the driver been moved to the company safety zone?		
2	Are all helpers in sight of the forklift/crane operator?		
3	Are the load restraints suitable to secure the load?		
4	Does the total weight of the cargo exceed the truck's carrying capacity?		
5	Is load well packed in the appropriate packaging?		
6	Is documentation completed for all cargo being dispatched?		
7	Has the driver double-checked all restraints for specific load requirements?		

All risks associated with the load have been identified and effective controls put in place

Company Rep.      Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Trucking Operator      Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

