

## Stack 'em, Rack 'em, Chock 'em, Block 'em

Stack the safety odds in your favor by safely storing materials. Many serious accidents are the result of improper stacking and storage. Materials can shift, slide, roll and fall onto workers. The result might be as minor as a bruised hand or as major as death in a crushing accident.

### *Here are some guidelines for safe storage and stacking of materials:*



- ◆ Store items out of traffic areas so others do not trip over them or strike them with in-plant vehicles. Do not allow items to protrude from shelves and racks.
  - ◆ Ensure the required ventilation, temperature and other safeguards for storing chemical substances. Certain substances should not be stored near one another.
  - ◆ Do not store small heavy items out of sight on an overhead shelf. The next person who reaches up to the shelf could accidentally pull them down on his head.
  - ◆ Store heavy items near the floor. This will make them easier to move and will decrease the chance of them falling on someone.
  - ◆ Load the lower shelves and drawers of cabinets first. If the cabinet is too heavy on top, it could fall over on someone.
  - ◆ Cabinets, shelving units, racks and other storage apparatus should be securely fastened to the wall.
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- ◆ Never climb on shelving units or racks. Use a platform, ladder or stepstool to reach higher shelves.
  - ◆ Objects that could roll, such as pipes or drums, must be blocked or chocked to prevent movement.
  - ◆ When storing packages of the same size, arrange them in a "key" formation so each layer is interdependent. This is the way a brick wall is constructed.
  - ◆ Conduct regular inspections of all storage and materials handling containers such as pallets, racks and shelves. Make sure they have not been damaged by forklifts, hand carts or loads of materials.
  - ◆ Do not exceed the safe loading level of racks, shelves, floors, lift devices and other surfaces.
  - ◆ Arrange storage areas with emergency escape in mind. Do not have dead-end aisles. Storage units should be far enough apart to accommodate a firefighter and firefighting equipment.
  - ◆ Do not block sprinkler heads, fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment with stored materials.
  - ◆ Be sure to observe all safety warnings, such as those prohibiting smoking in storage areas.

***Follow your company's procedures for safely handling and storing materials. Be aware of the hazards and make suggestions for improvements. The result will be a safer workplace for you, your fellow workers and our visitors.***

