

CHOCKING AND BLOCKING

ALLIANZ RISK CONSULTING



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Loading docks are a necessary part of nearly all industries. When we first think about a loading dock, we may think of large distribution warehouses with a number of docks on several sides of the building. However, many other types of operations may also have at least one loading dock, such as grocery stores, electronics retailers and small manufacturing facilities.

One of the many hazards associated with loading docks is the loading and unloading of truck trailers. Employees may enter the trailer several times during this process. One way to reduce the possibility of an employee injury, or a motor vehicle accident once the truck leaves the dock is to use proper chocking and blocking techniques.

The main purpose of chocking wheels is to pin the wheels and make sure that the trailer cannot move. Chocks should be placed against the wheels closest to the dock, especially on a tandem axle trailer. When a fork truck enters a trailer, it exerts a downward force and actually helps to pin the wheels against the chock. If the wheels are not chocked, this downward force may cause the trailer to move forward, away from the dock. The same thing might happen if the chocks are placed at the front axle. The gap created between the trailer and dock may cause a severe accident such as the forklift falling off the dock.

Once the trailer has been loaded, it is essential that the cargo be secured within the trailer. Shifting loads can be hazardous, including damaging other freight or injuring an employee. A sudden shift of freight may change the center of gravity, causing a trailer to overturn while in transit. All types of cargo can move, not just round or cylindrical equipment, or cargo on wheels.

Blocking of heavier cargo helps prevent heavier freight from moving within the trailer. Some payload may require blocking on all four sides to ensure it will not move. It is essential that the proper equipment be available to correctly block a load. This may include load bars, vertical supports and load straps. Anchor points within the trailer must be adequate to hold the straps in place as well.

Chocking and blocking while loading/unloading trailers may help avoid accidents. By taking the appropriate steps, your company may reduce employee exposures and improve accident/injury rates. If you would like further assistance, please contact your Allianz Risk Consultant.

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Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty SE, Global Communications, Dieselstrasse 8, 85774 Unterfoehring, Germany
Commercial Register: Munich, HRB 208312