Truck driver safety training: a toolbox talk

29 CFR 1910.178, 1926.21

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

What is the first thing you check before you move your truck or trailer?

Why it matters

A truck is heavy, hard to stop and hard to see around. Drivers share yards and docks with forklifts and people on foot. A mistake with a brake, a chock or a load can hurt someone fast. Good habits at the dock and on the road keep drivers and everyone around them safe.

Key points

1. **Do the walk-around every time**
   Walk around the truck and trailer before each trip. Check tires, lights, brakes, mirrors, coupling, load and anything that looks loose or leaking. Do not drive a vehicle that is not safe. Report problems and get them fixed. The same idea applies to forklifts, which must be examined before being placed in service and at least daily.
   29 CFR 1910.178(q)(7)

2. **Set the brakes and chock the wheels**
   At the dock, the brakes of highway trucks must be set and wheel chocks placed under the rear wheels to keep them from rolling while forklifts board them. Brakes must be set and wheel blocks in place while loading or unloading. A trailer not coupled to a tractor may need fixed jacks.
   29 CFR 1910.178(k)(1)

3. **Keep clear of forklifts and dock edges**
   Stay out of the forklift's path and make eye contact with the operator before you cross. No one may stand or pass under the elevated part of a forklift, loaded or empty. Keep a safe distance from the edge of an elevated dock or platform.
   29 CFR 1910.178(m)(2)

4. **Back up slowly and get out and look**
   Backing is a risky move. Walk around and check the path first. Use a spotter if you can, and agree on hand signals. If you lose sight of your spotter, stop. Sound the horn and use your mirrors and cameras. Slow down and sound the horn where vision is blocked.
   29 CFR 1910.178(n)(4)

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5 Secure the load

Make sure the load is stable and safely arranged. Use the right straps, chains or tie-downs for the load and check them at the start and during the trip. For forklifts, only stable or safely arranged loads should be handled. Load securement rules for trucks on public roads come from the Department of Transportation, not OSHA.

29 CFR 1910.178(o)(1)

6 Plan the journey

OSHA has no specific standard for a journey management plan; the general duty to train still applies. Plan the route, stops and rest breaks before you go. Note low bridges, weather and sites with special rules. Tell dispatch your plan, and speak up if the schedule is not safe.

29 CFR 1926.21(b)(2)

Scenario

Picture this: A driver backs into a dock in a hurry. He does not set the brakes or place chocks because the forklift driver is waiting. As the forklift enters the trailer, the truck shifts and the trailer creeps forward. The forklift tips at the gap, and a coworker barely steps out of the way. What should have been done before the forklift boarded the trailer, and who could have stopped it?

Crew discussion

1. What is on your walk-around checklist, and what do you check last?
2. Who sets the brakes and chocks at our dock, and how do we confirm it?
3. What is your backing routine, and when do you use a spotter?
4. How do we plan a trip so we are not rushed or tired?

Bottom line

Inspect, set the brakes, chock the wheels, back up with care and secure the load before you roll.

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Truck driver safety / Seguridad para choferes de camión

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____ Location / Lugar _____ Company / Empresa _____

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