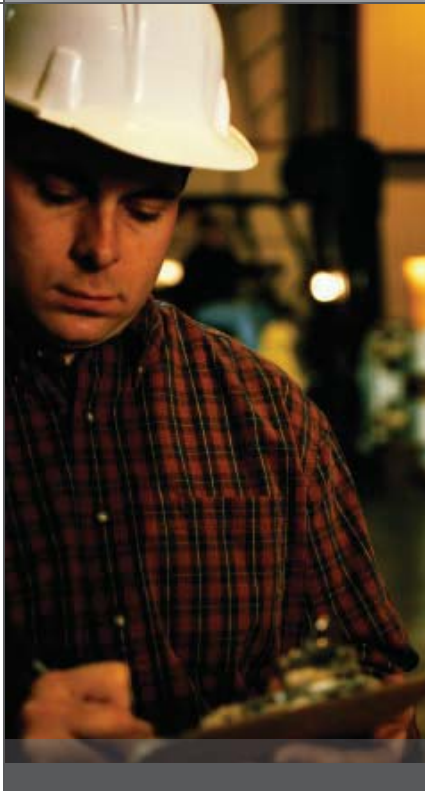




Warehouse Safety - Prevention is Better than the Cure!



There can be few things as traumatic in the professional life of a warehouse or distribution centre manager as a rack collapse.

In this general overview we examine the implications of a rack collapse and the preventative measures that can be taken.

Implications

There will almost certainly be a WorkCover investigation. If the collapse resulted in a fatality, injury or even a "near miss", a prosecution will follow. OH&S legislation allows for individuals as well as corporations to be charged with safety breaches.

If you are found to be the individual at fault, you will face hefty fines, possible imprisonment and in all likelihood, the loss of your job.

Aside from the issues of damaged stock, equipment and racking, there

will be massive disruptions to supply and customer service levels.

Accidents happen

Forklifts and other materials handling equipment striking racking is a common occurrence. To avoid this ensure the warehouse is set up to minimise the chances of this happening.

- Install rack protection systems such as guide rails, upright protectors and column guards.
- Always make sure beams are fitted safety locks to prevent accidental dislodgement of beams by forklift tynes.
- Safe working load and maintenance signs are mandatory.
- Provide adequate training for your equipment operators in safe driving and loading/unloading techniques.

Remember: Frequent occurrences of equipment hitting racking is a management issue not an operator issue.

Regular rack inspections

A “rack audit”

- is suggested every six months.
- helps identify a pattern of operation contributing to rack damage and can ascertain if additional training or signage, or upgraded rack protection systems are required.
- will identify potential weak areas that need repair or replacement.
- will identify normal wear and tear that may indicate a section of racking is ending its working life and needs replacing.

Incompatible components

Incompatible components such as imitation parts can also cause rack collapse.

Local and overseas companies are promoting components as “equivalent”

replacement parts for leading-brand racking products.

Imitation parts can compromise the integral load carrying capabilities of a storage system. This practice can also void a warranty and may result in an insurance claim being rejected.

Used storage equipment

Used racking may have been damaged.

Ensure that the system or part can carry the intended load and is fit-for-purpose.

Used components may not be suitable for a particular application. Different upright grades, beam styles and footplate types are all designed for specific uses.

Overloading and incorrect installation

Overloading and/or incorrect installation is another contributor to rack collapse.

Professional advice and correct installation procedures ensure racking is capable of standing up to the loads being imposed on it.

Changing beam levels has a major impact on the original design capabilities of a rack.

Adding bits and pieces or simply adjusting beam levels, may be potentially dangerous.

Conclusion

Taking all possible steps to ensure the safety of your warehouse and your staff may well constitute a strong defence in the event of a collapse and any resulting prosecution.

A rack audit could save your business, your reputation and your workers’ lives by identifying potential danger areas and recommending upgraded or replacement components.

Organise an audit today!

