

LOADING DOCK SAFETY

UW Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) is providing this information to raise awareness of safety hazards near loading docks and how to safely operate around these areas.

LOADING DOCKS

A loading dock is an area beside a building that facilitates transport of materials from the building to a vehicle or vice versa. There are many loading docks around the University of Washington, and they can vary in appearance. Loading docks can be flush with the building envelope or fully enclosed. Some loading docks may just be a curb next to a building used for commercial loading.

HOUSEKEEPING

Loading docks must always be kept in a clean and orderly manner to meet safety and regulatory requirements.

- **Spills must be cleaned up** appropriately to ensure the sanitation of the dock area, to prevent slips, trips, and falls, and to avoid attracting pest and wildlife.
- **Pest control measures** must be put into practice to contain or deter pests, such as **keeping waste bins closed** when not in use and not overfilling them so the lid will no longer close.
- **Don't prop dock doors open** unattended. This presents a building safety risk and access opportunity for pests and wildlife.
- General **waste and recycling** *are not allowed* to pile up or be abandoned on the loading dock; waste must be placed in appropriate containers.
- **Compressed gas cylinders** must *not* accumulate on loading docks; request a pickup when empty. Follow appropriate **storage requirements** while awaiting pickup.
- **Smoking and vaping are not allowed** on loading docks at the UW. Smoking and vaping may only occur in **designated areas**.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Hazardous waste includes chemical, biological, and radiological waste, as well as regulated building materials (e.g., asbestos, lead, etc.).

When handling hazardous waste on a loading dock, remember that:

- Waste containers must be **labeled** appropriately depending on the type of waste it contains.
- Hazardous waste must be disposed of following EH&S procedures:
 - [Radioactive Waste](#)
 - [Biohazardous Waste](#)
 - [Chemical Waste](#)
 - [Regulated Building Materials](#)

Units overseeing contractors must ensure they are aware of the approved methods to dispose of waste and that it is conducted properly.



Source: www.istockphoto.com/photos/hospital-loading-dock

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Items improperly stored on a loading dock can pose a risk to the environment. Keeping the loading dock clean helps minimize the risk of unwanted items entering the [stormwater system](#).

Do *not* store chemicals outside of secondary containment near a drain due to the risk of accidental spill or release.

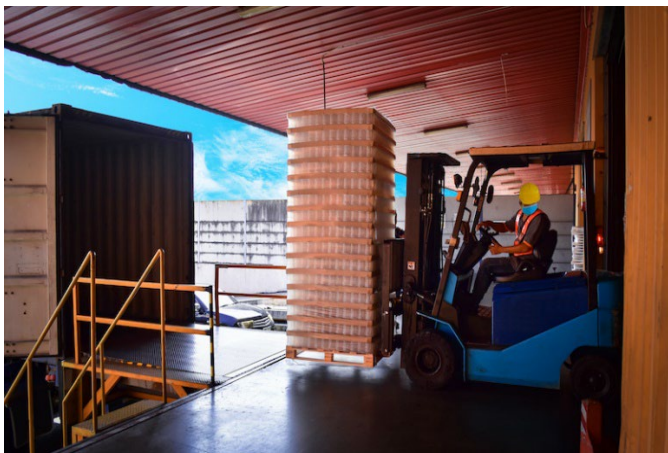
Refer to the following resources for more information:

- [Stormwater Pollution Prevention webpage](#)
- [Stormwater Operations & Maintenance Plans](#) for UW Bothell and the Seattle campus
- [UW Tacoma Sustainability](#)

Contact EH&S Environmental Programs at 206.616.5835 (chmwaste@uw.edu) with questions.

REPORT ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES PROMPTLY

via the UW [Online Accident Reporting System](#).



Source: blog.constructionmarketingassociation.org

GENERAL SAFETY PRACTICES

Physical hazards

- **Hoists** may only be used by those who have been properly trained in their use and follow the [Crane, Hoist, and Rigging Safety](#) program.
- Loading docks must be [assessed](#) by the space owner for potential **slip, trip, and fall hazards**; any identified hazards must be mitigated.
- Items must *not* be stored or transported in a manner that could create a **fall hazard** for others.
- **Forklifts** must *not* be operated by anyone who has *not* completed the [required Forklift and Lift-Truck Operator Safety training](#).
- When using a **dock leveler**, ensure it is securely in place before use. When not in use, it should be securely stored away (if portable) or lowered (if a permanent fixture) so as to not cause a potential hazard.
- While operating a **trash compactor**, ensure body parts are kept clear of the danger zone. Receive **training** by your unit and understand the hazards of trash compactors before use.

Sprinklers

- Sprinklers must be a **minimum distance of 18"** from any item to effectively function in the event of a fire.
- Attention must be paid when moving large items on a loading dock to ensure sprinkler systems are not damaged.

Vehicles

- Gas- or diesel-powered vehicles are **not allowed to idle** in loading dock areas as the exhaust may create air quality issues in and around buildings. All vehicles waiting in a loading dock must be turned off until ready to exit the space.
- Vehicles must **operate with caution** when entering and exiting loading dock zones as visibility may be limited or obstructed.
- All docks with a drop of 4 feet or more must have a safety barrier. After unloading, always put the **safety barrier/chain back** into place.

Egress and ADA accessibility

- Emergency exits and/or ADA accessible areas must never be blocked.

Contact EH&S at 206.543.7262 or ehsdept@uw.edu for more information.