



**KENTUCKY**  
AGC Self Insurers' Fund

## **Preventing Struck-By Incidents from Shifting Loads in Material Handling**

Struck-by incidents from shifting or falling loads are a major source of serious injuries in construction, manufacturing, and aggregate operations. Forklifts, pallets, and rigging systems all introduce risks when loads are unstable, improperly secured, or handled without proper planning.

### **Recognize the Hazards**

Loads can shift due to uneven weight, poor securing, sudden movement, or environmental conditions. Forklifts may tip or lose loads if overloaded or operated on uneven ground. Pallets can fail when damaged or stacked improperly. Suspended loads can swing or drop if slings or rigging are not correctly selected or inspected.

### **Plan the Task**

Before handling materials, assess the load's weight, center of gravity, and stability. Confirm equipment capacity and plan clear, level travel paths. Establish exclusion zones to keep workers away from moving or suspended loads.

### **Operate Equipment Safely**

Only trained operators should use forklifts. Keep loads low and tilted back, avoid sudden movements, and maintain visibility—using a spotter if needed. Never exceed capacity or carry elevated loads while traveling.

### **Ensure Load Stability**

Inspect pallets before use and avoid damaged ones. Distribute weight evenly and secure loads with wrap or banding. Stack materials only on stable, level surfaces and avoid overloading.

### **Use Proper Rigging**

Select slings based on the load and inspect all rigging before use. Balance loads before lifting and use tag lines to control movement. Never stand under suspended loads, and ensure clear communication between operators and signal persons.

### **Maintain Awareness**

Use clear signals or radios, especially in busy areas. Keep workers out of load paths and designate safe walkways. Stay alert to moving equipment at all times.

### **Adjust for Conditions**

Weather and ground conditions affect stability. Slow down or stop work when conditions increase risk.

### **Conclusion**

Reducing struck-by hazards requires planning, proper equipment use, and constant awareness. Consistent safe practices can significantly lower the risk of injuries from shifting loads.