

# Creating a safety culture at the UK's pallet networks



The Association of  
Pallet Networks

[theapn.co.uk](http://theapn.co.uk)



Supporting Health & Safety Day 28th April 2022

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**Allports**  
Group

## Our health and safety forum

Everyone has the right to be safe at work. Employers and employees at all levels must work together to create and understand safe ways of working and prevention of injury must be our top priority. Safety is everyone's responsibility.

The APN has a Health & Safety Forum Group, established in 2006. It is made up of the H&S representatives of each member network. The group meets quarterly to analyse health and safety issues and trends, and to discuss working practices.

Each month, members report and categorise any accidents that have taken place. This data is valuable and facilitates open discussion to allow us to drive continuous sector improvement of health and safety standards.

The group undertakes to discuss topics within the sector and to launch projects leading to poster and educational campaigns for members.

**6,300** deaths from occupational accidents

**317** million workplace accidents

**2.3** million deaths from work-related disease

We're aiming for **0**

### Global accidents & deaths related to work annually

#### Our key stats

- In 2021 APN members delivered 31.5m pallets; 13.2% growth overall year on year.
- Hub safety continues to improve.
- Although numerically safety-related incidents at pallet network hubs increased slightly, the rate of incidents per 100,000 pallets reduced for the fourth consecutive year. The rate is now 0.49 against 2020's 0.53.
- The most common cause of hub related safety incidents, accounting for 23% of the total, is load security equipment such as straps, nets and curtains. In total there were 152 Hub safety incidents, 3.8% down on 2019, and 0.7% higher than 2020.
- Average pallet weight in 2021 was 374kg.



## Opening and closing curtainsider trailers

Curtainsiders are widely used in the road transport industry, but operators aren't always aware of the dangers involved with opening and closing a curtain. Poor handling of the buckles, curtains and poles can result in a range of injuries.

### SAFETY ISSUES

Common causes of injury include:

- Buckles flailing in windy conditions
- Poorly maintained pole securing mechanisms
- Securing and releasing buckles
- Pulling curtains
- Shifting loads

### RESULTING INJURIES

- Head injuries
- Finger, thumb, and hand injuries
- Back and shoulder strains
- Injuries caused by load falling onto drivers when curtains are opened

### DIRECT COSTS OF INJURY

- Suffering, pain and physical deficits
- Costs of accidents and work-related illnesses
- Wages during injury
- Cost of medical treatment

### INDIRECT COSTS

- Working hours of other employees
- Damage to property
- Productivity losses
- Company reputation
- Employee moral and potential effect on
- Retention

## Reducing the likelihood of injury



### 1. Improve your posture when pulling

When pulling, keep your hands between shoulder and waist height. Pull with two hands rather than one. Try to use the stronger muscles in the legs when pulling the curtain by bending the knees and dipping slightly before applying the pull force and don't twist while you're pulling.



### 2. Beware of wind!

Data shows that 36% of injuries were caused by windy conditions while manoeuvring the curtains. Wherever possible try to operate the curtains in wind free environments. Even in moderately windy conditions, curtains should be secured to minimise unexpected movement.



### 3. Wear good footwear

Forceful pulling requires a good grip on the floor. The forces involved in manoeuvring the curtains require greater levels of friction to maintain a secure footing, so slip resistant footwear should be worn.

## Opening and closing curtains safely

- Always wear a bump cap and protective gloves.
- Release tensioner at one end. Undo the buckle or strap nearest the end pole, then release and remove the end pole.
- Undo the rest of the buckles in order, always keeping your body behind the fastened buckles. This way, you won't be in the way of any load which falls.
- Using two hands release the foot of the free pole.
- Stand at the end still attached, grasp two buckles of curtain and pull backwards. Do not try to slide the entire curtain at once. Do it in sections.
- Remember support poles are under a lot of tension. When releasing a pole do NOT stand in front of it. Always stand to the side, so you are out of any hinge-swing area.
- Use your body weight to do the work. Do not twist your body.
- Secure the curtain at the rear of the vehicle if possible.
- To close and secure the curtain, follow the same instructions in reverse. Always wear your bump cap, gloves and sturdy footwear.

## Tail-lift safety guide

Risk-assessment employers must ensure that all tasks involving the use of the tail lift are risk assessed and measures put in place to control them as far as is reasonably practicable. This is a legal requirement.

A dynamic risk assessment can be carried out by a trained and competent delivery driver where site or load conditions are outside the scope of the generic risk assessment.

A dynamic risk assessment does not replace the employers' responsibility to assess, in advance, the risks of workplace handling activities to identify hazards and appropriate controls-preferably with driver involvement.

If a driver believes they cannot deliver safely, they must be able to refuse delivery until a safer way is worked out. If they feel they must deliver regardless of concerns, someone is likely to get injured. It is important that all operatives know they will be supported in their safety decisions.



## Trips, slips and falls



- All areas in which employees must perform duties must be well lit.



- Workspaces must be kept clear of waste, such as shrink wrap and broken pallets.



- Spills of any kind must be reported, cleaned up and the area cordoned off.



- All equipment must be returned to a safe state when not in use. Pump trucks are not only a trip hazard due to their prongs, but also a slip hazard as they are free moving.



- When not in use, forklifts must always be left with forks facing towards the ground.

## APN Safety Certificates



## APN Safety Posters

The Association of Pallet Networks

**BEST PRACTICE - AVOIDING FORKLIFT COLLISIONS**

 <b>SPEED</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STICK TO THE DESIGNATED SPEED LIMIT</li> <li>• ADJUST SPEED TO SUIT THE WORK CONDITIONS</li> </ul>	 <b>CONGESTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLOW DOWN</li> <li>• TAKE EXTRA CARE</li> <li>• NO TAGALTING OTHER FORK OR VEHICLES</li> </ul>	 <b>BLIND CORNER AHEAD</b> <b>RESPONSIBILITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BE AWARE OF OTHER LIFT TRUCKS</li> <li>• BE AWARE OF BLIND SPOTS</li> <li>• SOUND YOUR HORN</li> <li>• NEVER TRAVEL WITH RAISED FORKS</li> </ul>
 <b>ENVIRONMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WET FLOOR</li> <li>• LIGHTING</li> <li>• SLOW DOWN</li> <li>• DRIVE TO CONDITIONS</li> </ul>	 <b>VISIBILITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FACE IN THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL</li> <li>• ENSURE CLEAR VISIBILITY</li> </ul>	 <b>GIVE WAY</b> <b>COURTESY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIVE WAY</li> </ul>

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