



## **Empty Skids And Pallets**

**Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission/  
Health & Safety Division**

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The handling of empty skids and pallets may seem like a rather routine job to most of you, at least so far as safety is concerned. But don't be fooled. In doing this type of work, you perform certain acts that can easily result in injuries if safety precautions aren't taken. Material handling causes more injuries than any other type of work. I can even be more specific and say that lifting is the leading type of accident suffered by people on the job. And, of course, in handling skids and pallets, lifting is a basic maneuver.

So, let's take a few moments to go over some of the steps we can take to keep injuries at a minimum.

- First, inspect the skids and pallets you'll be working with for splinters, loose nails, and other defects. If you find a unit that is unsafe, it should be set aside and marked for discard or repair.
- Any lifting to be done should be performed with caution. Usually the handling of skids requires two men, whether stacking or discarding, and they should lift in unison. The same procedure should be used for lifting pallets if they are heavy or bulky.
- Lifting should be done by bending your knees, then straightening your legs to lift. Keep your back straight and use leg muscles, not back muscles.

As an added safety measure while handling objects, there is certain protective equipment which should be worn. Leather work gloves will protect your hands, and, of course, safety shoes will protect your toes. You probably already realize how important a clean work area is to your safety and the safety of others. Well, a lot of safe housekeeping has to go into skid and pallet handling, too.

- Stacking should be done with care so that piles will be stable. Piles should be limited to a height of four feet, and units should be stacked flat, never on end.

- Piles and individual units must be kept clear of aisles and doorways, and they shouldn't obstruct switch boxes, fire extinguishers, and other emergency equipment. Runners and deck boards shouldn't stick out into aisles where someone will bump into them or trip over them. If possible, avoid walking on or stepping over skids and pallets, as this can easily result in an accident.
- Another thing that must be considered in stacking units is the weight capacity of the floor. The crush strength of units you're working with shouldn't be exceeded either. If you're working with paperboard, you have to allow for its lower resistance, which makes it easier to be damaged than wood. It also will absorb more moisture, which can weaken it. Skids and pallets may look sturdy, but when you drop units, you can weaken them. Noise has to be kept under control, too.

Sometimes separate skid runners and platforms are used. When this occurs, the platforms should be stacked flat in a rack—no more than 32 units high. Again, care must be taken when removing the platforms from the rack. Usually, a man is stationed on each side.

As I mentioned earlier, it may be necessary to discard certain units for scrap. In that case, trucks or dollies should be used, especially if the load is to be moved any distance. Loads of units to be discarded should be stacked carefully. Be on your guard for nails and splinters, and, if disposal of the units is to be carried out by burning, all fire and safety regulations should be observed.

I've taken several minutes to cover some of the major points of safety in handling empty skids and pallets. They're all pretty basic—the types of precautions that should be taken on many jobs. But that's the way it should go with safety. Develop safe practices and attitudes on one job, and they'll follow through in everything you do.

Date	Company Name	
Project Name	Meeting Location	Person Conducting Meeting

**Items Discussed:**

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**Problem Areas or Concerns:**

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**Attendees:**

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