

SOP: Cargo Loading and Unloading Guidelines

This SOP details **cargo loading and unloading guidelines**, encompassing proper handling techniques, equipment usage, safety protocols, weight distribution, securing methods, and inspection procedures. The goal is to ensure the safe, efficient, and damage-free transfer of cargo while minimizing risks to personnel and equipment during all loading and unloading operations.

1. Purpose

To outline standard procedures for the safe and efficient loading and unloading of cargo, minimizing the risk of injury and damage.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in cargo handling, including but not limited to warehouse staff, forklift operators, and drivers.

3. Definitions

- **Cargo:** Goods or materials transported for business purposes.
- **PPE:** Personal Protective Equipment.
- **Load Securement:** Methods and materials used to hold cargo in place during transport.

4. Responsibilities

- Supervisors: Ensure all staff are trained and SOPs are enforced.
- Handlers/Operators: Follow guidelines and report any incidents or hazards.
- Inspectors: Conduct inspections before, during, and after operations.

5. Procedure

5.1 Preparation

1. Review cargo manifest and loading/unloading plan.
2. Inspect equipment (forklifts, pallet jacks, etc.) for proper functioning.
3. Ensure designated work area is clear of unnecessary personnel and obstacles.
4. Wear required PPE (e.g., gloves, safety shoes, high-visibility vests, helmets).

5.2 Cargo Loading

1. Check cargo for damage or discrepancies before loading.
2. Plan cargo placement to distribute weight evenly and prevent shifting.
3. Use proper lifting techniques and mechanical aids to move cargo.
4. Secure cargo using straps, nets, or other suitable load securing devices.
5. Verify stability of cargo before moving vehicle or equipment.
6. Complete documentation of loaded cargo (cargo manifest, checklist).

5.3 Cargo Unloading

1. Inspect the cargo area for potential hazards before entering.
2. Remove securing devices or restraints carefully to avoid sudden shifts.
3. Unload cargo in reverse order of loading, where possible.
4. Use equipment and correct manual handling techniques to unload cargo.
5. Inspect cargo for damage and record findings.

5.4 Equipment Usage & Safety Protocols

- Operate all equipment according to manufacturer instructions and company policies.
- Only certified personnel may operate forklifts, cranes, or specialized equipment.
- Maintain communication with team members using radios or agreed signals.
- Immediately report any equipment malfunction or safety concerns.

5.5 Inspection Procedures

- Pre-operation: Inspect equipment and cargo for damage or non-compliance.
- During operation: Monitor for unsafe conditions or shifting loads.
- Post-operation: Check for damages, complete inspections, and submit records.

6. Documentation & Records

- Maintain cargo manifests, inspection checklists, and incident reports for each operation.
- Retain records as per company policy and regulatory requirements.

7. Training

- All personnel must receive initial and periodic training on cargo handling, equipment usage, and safety protocols.
- Training records must be kept and reviewed regularly.

8. Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author/Approver
1.0	2024-06-05	Initial SOP template release	Logistics Manager