

IDENTIFYING RACK DAMAGE THROUGH INSPECTIONS

Where there are forklifts, there are generally damages. Lift trucks are among the leading causes of damage to warehouse racks. But the pallets they carry can also strike rack components as they are being transported or handled, and these damages are often left unreported. Although a great number of accidents occur annually, forklift operators are not likely to report an accident involving pallet rack systems, so the damage goes undetected. But aside from the more forceful and visible damage due to these trucks, there are several other ways a pallet rack's integrity can be compromised:

- Missing components** such as braces, anchors or beam clips.
- Unknown load capacity and improper loading of pallets** can create instability, stress on a concentrated part of the rack causing the system to implode or collapse in a domino effect.
- Modifying the original configuration of your rack**, such as moving a beam height without an engineer's approval can result in a weakened structure, causing increased risk to those who work around it.
- Rust or corrosion** of components, especially in warehouse environments exposed to humidity.
- Complacency or unawareness of deficiencies** can lead to unaddressed rack damage and unnecessary risk.

Although the majority of rack damage occurs between the floor and the first horizontal beam, damage can occur at any level, and it not always visible from the aisles. Only a thorough examination or assessment will tell you if your racking system is safe. An Engineer or safety specialist experienced with racking is best suited to help you assess the conformity of your racking systems and can support you in prioritizing the issues once they have been reported.

How frequently should a warehouse be inspected?

Regulation is unclear on the required frequency of inspections. It depends on the activity and speed at which rack related issues accumulate in particular warehouse. Some aisles may require daily or weekly inspections. Although not clearly expressed, OSHA and RMI recommend monthly inspections by warehouse personnel and yearly independent inspections by third party vendors.

Remember:

- Inspections are the best way to know if your racking systems is compliant.
- Once damage has been identified, it should be replaced or repaired.
- The rack's load capacity should be calculated and displayed
- Pallet racks are connected to each other in a giant web of steel. Just one severely damaged upright can compromise the rest of the system, causing it to collapse.

Please know McCormick Equipment and Damotech offer conformity inspection of pallet rack systems, performed by experienced engineers. We can train your personnel in this expertise as well.

We also offer P&G approved mitigation of damage through different repair products and procedures that may be of interest. Mainly Upright and Vertical and Horizontal supports.

