

Handling Materials and Supplies

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The speaker said in part: How important is this phase of safety work? Here are some interesting figures, as taken from the I. C. C. Bulletin No. 100 for the year 1931: Handling rails, ties, bridge timbers, etc., accounted for 4 deaths and 1,874 injuries; handling explosives, flammables, hot or corrosive substances accounted for 8 deaths and 306 injuries; handling freight and supplies accounted for 6 deaths and 1,573 injuries. Thus, in handling materials and supplies in 1931, there were 18 deaths and 3,753 injuries on American railroads.

Let us proceed, then, with a consideration of the men who handle these materials. In selecting men who by reason of their positions must do much of the handling of materials and supplies the same general requirements applicable to all railroad employment should be followed, with these characteristics outstanding: intelligence, physical fitness and a co-operative disposition, for he must be able to team.

1. Men are cautioned not to show their strength foolishly, like the unnecessary handling of a barrel of oil alone. Setting a barrel of oil on a can is two men's work.

2. Never put green men at handling wheels, mounted or loose. It is a big hazard and a waste of time. Keep the wheel platform free of loafers.

3. Only capable men may operate alligator shears—those who know metal.

4. In handling scrap or salvage material men must know that way is clear and piles or bins must be kept orderly the same as with new material.

5. No man may enter nor remain in an oil tank without another man at the manhole.

6. Only experienced men may make hitches or hooks for train loads.

7. Men are forbidden to ride any load being raised or lowered by power.

8. Men must keep from under loads, magnets, etc., and be close only when loads are lowered to position. If necessary to guide loads, ropes or long poles must be used.

9. When any unusual load or unusual material, because of its weight or shape, is to be moved, the foreman must direct its handling.

10. Finally, the most important consideration in handling heavy materials is team work. An adequate number of men to handle the job who can be counted on to work in unison or harmony, each doing his share, lifting and reaching at the proper time and being watchful of his own safety and that of fellow workers is a prime essential. And don't forget that some men simply cannot do this. Their make-up is not rhythmic.

We may now consider methods. It is quite universally recognized that the first essential of safety in methods is good housekeeping. General suggestions on handling materials and supplies may be as follows:

1. Keep workroom supplies as low as practicable. Storage should not be allowed here. Likewise keep finished products moving; congestion makes hazards.

2. Piling stock safely is an obvious requirement of the safe method. Heavy materials low, light materials higher; height of piles governed by nature of shape, bulk and weight of materials; fillers to prevent piles from rocking, rolling or slipping; bins, boxes and trays for smaller articles; adequate aisles, runways and track clearances are all necessary general governing rules to follow.

3. Trucks, trailer wagons, etc. should be kept in first class repair, and good judgment used not to overload them. In placing and piling of materials on them work must not be slovenly and awkward; materials must be secured or held during the movement.

4. In store stocks, many good standard practices have been recommended. These should be followed and occasionally checked up. Then there is the standard method of stacking journal brasses, safe and which will protect bearing surfaces. All such standards should be followed religiously unless better methods are known and here we might mention the many standards prescribed for loading freight on cars, all of which may be obtained from the mechanical division, A.R.A.

5. Only standard signals should be used to direct train movements and use man at a time giving them, unless necessary to relay the signals. In directing the movement of timbers a long stick is helpful. All hitches should be felt out before lift is made. Lifts should not be made until operator knows men are in the clear.

6. Heavy loads should not be lifted until outriggers on portable cranes are placed.

7. Wheel platforms should be kept free of obstructions, smooth, free of ice, snow and frost when in use.

8. Perhaps it is the failure to foresee the unusual in the ordinary routine that causes more injuries in handling materials and supplies than any one of the whole range of classified causes, for pinched and bruised fingers and toes constitute the greater part of them all. The general cause is usually given as carelessness, but another name for lapse of attention.

Report of Committee on Non-train Accidents

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The speaker said in part: An employee in any department or occupation may suffer a non-train accident, but the general classes in which this type of accident predominate are maintenance of way and structure employees; shops, roundhouse, power house and store department employees; and station and office employees.

We are using the Interstate Commerce Commission figures for the year 1931, because these are the latest complete authentic figures that have been analyzed and made available to your Committee, and because 1931 was a more representative year than 1932 by reason of heavy repairs and betterment work having been almost completely out of the picture during 1932.

Attention is directed to the fact that the number of non-train accidents is greater than the train accidents and the train service accidents combined:

154 killed in non-train accidents in 1931 represents 24 per cent of the total killed. 12,598 injured in non-train accidents in 1931 represents 58 per cent of the total injured.

Thus a total of 12,752 casualties are recorded in non-train accidents in 1931, which represents 57 per cent of the total casualties.

The principal effort against non-train accidents should be carried on in the maintenance of way and equipment departments, since they produce 75 per cent of the total industrial accidents, and 95 per cent of the accidents in those departments are to non-train men; 38 per cent occurred in maintenance of way, with 4,965 casualties.