

PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY SAFETY

By Associates Insurance Agency



MANAGING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN MIXED-TRAFFIC ENVIRONMENTS

Warehouses and construction sites are high-risk zones where powered industrial trucks (PITs), such as forklifts, operate near pedestrians. According to OSHA, these sectors face fatal injury rates above the national average due to vehicle strikes and falling loads. Implementing defined pedestrian walkways and behavioral controls is essential for mitigating these risks and ensuring regulatory compliance.

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KEY RISK FACTORS IN MIXED-TRAFFIC AREAS

Incidents often stem from:

- **Obstructed Visibility:** Blind corners, high racking, and narrow aisles.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Poorly marked paths or temporary obstructions like misplaced pallets.
- **Distractions:** Cellphone use, headphones, or worker conversations.
- **High-Traffic Zones:** Congregations near breakrooms or shift-change areas.

REGULATORY EXPECTATIONS

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.178 mandates safe PIT operation, speed limits, and operator training. Under the General Duty Clause, employers must also address recognized hazards even if specific regulations aren't detailed. Adhering to ANSI/ITSSDF B56 standards further strengthens a defensible safety program.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE WALKWAYS

- **Layout and Visibility:** Use high-contrast floor striping for lanes and crossings. Install mirrors at blind corners and ensure adequate lighting.
- **Physical Separation:** Use guardrails, barriers, and high-impact posts to physically divide vehicles from pedestrians. Controlled entry points like swing gates help manage access.
- **Flow Management:** Designate walkways wide enough for two-way traffic, positioned away from pinch points and tight turns.



HIGH-RISK INTERSECTION CONTROLS

Enhance safety at intersections using convex mirrors and PIT-mounted cameras. Operators should use horns and backup alarms consistently. Advanced technology, such as proximity sensors, automatic braking, and wearable vibrating sensors, provides additional layers of protection.



CONCLUSION

A robust pedestrian management plan reduces collisions, ensures OSHA compliance, and minimizes operational downtime. Integrating these controls into onboarding and contractor orientations creates a comprehensive safety strategy for dynamic workplaces.

Contact us today for additional risk management guidance.

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TRAINING AND BEHAVIOR

Both operators and pedestrians require thorough training.

- **Operators:** Focus on yielding, speed reduction, and signaling.
- **Pedestrians:** Emphasize staying within marked paths and avoiding distractions.
- **Shared Protocols:** Encourage eye contact and hand signals to confirm intent before crossing.

MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- **Housekeeping:** Keep walkways clear of debris and ensure stacked materials don't block sight lines.
- **Monitoring:** Supervisors should conduct regular walkthroughs and review telematics for unsafe patterns.
- **Culture:** Track near-misses to identify gaps and update traffic plans whenever equipment or staff changes occur.

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WALKWAYS
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