

National Distribution Service Operations Toolbox talks

Topic	Always Check Pallets, Cages and Load Stability
Audience	All NDS Sites and Shifts
Lead	Supervisor delivery
Format	Staff briefing
Recording	All staff to sign for attendance and understanding. Those on annual leave and absence will be briefed on return to the workplace.
Case study – NSS data	<p>In the last couple of years NSS have received numerous complaints from health boards in relation to both the physical condition of the cages and pallet used for deliveries and the stability of loads which they contain.</p> <p>The condition of the equipment is also thought to have contributed to a number of accidents recorded at Health board sites.</p> <p>In response to these complaints NDS have put in a process where we check pallets and cages as well as the loads they contain.</p> <p>IN then last month we have 15 consignment checks which totals 979 cages in which 10 cages were defected</p>
Pallets, Cages and Load Stability	<p>As the central part of the NHS Scotland distribution and supply chain we deliver all over the country and our loads and products can be handled a number of times before reaching the end user</p> <p>Therefore, the safe building, handling and moving pallets cages and loads is fundamental to our colleague's safety and to all those within the supply chain</p> <p>Because Pallets and Cages are the main piece of equipment used to transport loads at the NDS, the stability, build, containment, and structural integrity ensures a safer means of usage. There are many incidences where overlooking cage and pallet structure has been the root cause in near misses and accidents.</p>
Hazards associated with Pallets	<p>Pallets are used widely throughout industry and are the main platform for storing handling and the transportation of goods. Pallets are covered by 1998 PUWER legislation. This legislation includes a requirement 'for work equipment to be constructed as to be suitable for the purpose for which it is used for'. Pallets are used as a base and are compatible with mechanical handling equipment (MHE) and must be of sound construction and be able to withstand the items placed on/within them. Pallets are heavy so when accidents happen, they can be very serious. As is the case with most workplace accidents/incidents, this can be preventable by developing safe working practices.</p> <p>Some of these hazards associated with pallets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor design, construction and in disrepair.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using incorrect pallet materials or incorrect pallet design. • Using a pallet which is unsuitable for a particular load. • Unsafe stacking resulting in falling stock or pallets. • Understanding the correct pallet sizing (Euro pallets are 800 x 1200mm and Standard UK pallets are 1000mm x 1200). • Using damaged pallets. • Bad handling techniques. • Using incorrect MHE • Unsafe pallet building or incorrect stock placement resulting in an unstable load. • Incorrect Covering/wrapping that does not prevent load shifting during transit.
Hazards associated with Cages	<p>Manually propelled roll cages are widely used within industry. Being used to transport goods within factory, warehouse and retail. Of the various forms of cage, at the NDC we use standard sized 1700mm x 735 x 850 cages. As with pallets, roll cages are also covered by 1998 PUWER legislation.</p> <p>As well as being handled with MHE, unlike pallets, roll cages are also designed to be moved with manual handling. This can increase hazards.</p> <p>Some associated hazards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor design, construction and in disrepair. • Using incorrect cage for intended use. • Using cage which is unsuitable for certain items. • Unsafe stacking and placement of items within the cage. • Overloading a cage affecting stability and centre of gravity. • Roll cage wheel causing cage to stray from intended direction. • Uneven surfaces causing movement issues.
Formal Checkpoints	<p>Additional formal checks have been put in place to monitor the equipment and stability of loads to demonstrate and evidence our approach to load safety.</p> <p>There are several formal checkpoints in our order picking process where a defective cage/pallet/ load can be identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Selecting a cage and pallet for picking -During consolidation of load -Loading onto the vehicle
Informal Checkpoints	<p>We need to be vigilant and identify and remove defective cages and pallets from the process and ensure all loads are suitably built and as such any time a cage or pallet is handled or moved it should be quickly assessed for suitability and stability of load</p>
What should you do if you come across a defective pallet or cage or unstable load?	<p>If you come across defective cage or pallet please ensure it is removed to the appropriate quarantine areas before disposal</p> <p>Should you suspect a load is unstable, break the load down and rebuild in a more appropriate manner, with heavy products on the bottom and lighter products on the top</p>

Key Safety messages.	<p>The safe building, handling and moving pallets cages and loads is fundamental to our colleague's safety and to all those within the supply chain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to be vigilant and remove defective cages and pallets process. - Ensure that all loads suitably built - There are 3 formal checkpoints in our order picking process where a defective cage/pallet/ load can be identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting a cage and pallet for picking • During consolidation of load • Loading onto the vehicle
Further Information and Guidance	<p>Further Information and guidance is available on HR Connect, Safe Systems of Work documents and workplace risk assessments. Also, the HSE website has information relating to Pallet and Cage safety. If you feel you require assistance or have any Questions or queries, contact a member of management</p>
Post Talk assessment of Understanding	<p>Each supervisor will undertake and document 5 colleague observations in relation to the use of pallet cage and load stability. They will assess.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suitability of the cage or pallet - If the cage or pallet is free from defects - If the load is built correctly and is stable