

Will your racking and storage system stand up to inspection?

Pallet racking can be dangerous—both for workers and for bystanders. The most serious dangers occur when all or part of a rack collapses or when loads fall off a rack or forklift. The Ministry of Labour is gearing up for a blitz of racking and storage systems in the industrial and transportation sectors in November.

These incidents usually happen

- because racks are not designed, installed, or assembled properly
- because the wrong kind of equipment is used to load or unload the racks
- because a rack is damaged.

Inspection program

Employers that use pallet storage racks in the workplace must have a program for inspecting them regularly or after any damage has been reported. They must also keep a record of each inspection.

The person who does the inspection must have

1. specific training in inspecting storage racks
2. a plan of the current layout
3. elevation drawings
4. manufacturer's instructions for the racks.

For more info about specifications, installation, maintenance, inspection, and hazards, refer to the CSA's *Standard for the Design and Construction of Steel Storage Racks (A344.2-05)* and the accompanying *User Guide for Steel Storage Racks (A344.1-05)*.

Inspections: What to look for

Product

- Is the product or material placed correctly on the racks?
- Is the product or material secure?
- Are the pallets damaged?

Beams

- Are the beams overloaded?
- Are any beams damaged?
- Are any beam connectors or safety clips missing?
- Has a beam popped out of its upright?
- Are any welds damaged?

Safe working limits

- Have rack-load signs been posted?

Uprights and footplates

- Are the uprights damaged?
- Are the uprights and footplate guards in place?

Out-of-plumb racking

- Is the racking vertical?

Braces

- Are any racking braces damaged or missing?

Floor fixing

- Are the anchor bolts installed?



According to section 7 of *Ontario Regulation 851 – Industrial Establishments*, if you are installing or modifying racks, you must have a professional engineer do a pre-start health and safety review (PSR) to ensure that the racks comply with the Rack Manufacturers Institute's (RMI) *Specification for the Design, Testing, and Utilization of Industrial Steel Storage Racks (ANSI MH16.1)*. However, if you are installing a new rack system, you may not need a PSR if the supplier of the racks can provide documentation to prove that they meet the current standards.

Federally regulated companies should refer to section 14.50 of the *Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* and to the CSA standards on steel storage racks (A344.2-05 and A344.1-05).

Rack safety is the employer's responsibility—the rack system must meet safety standards at all times and must be inspected regularly.