**4 SAFETY TIPS FOR LOADING YOUR BOX TRUCKS**



“Safety first!” sums up what drivers must observe when loading cargo into their box truck. When it comes to loading box trucks, it’s easy for drivers to get distracted with other issues at the dock/loading area or focus instead on the urgency of the job at hand without considering safe loading procedures. As a result, they become susceptible to strains, fractures, and other bodily injuries caused by improper body mechanics when lifting, carrying, or loading items.

In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [indicates](https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2015/article/pdf/workplace-hazards-of-truck-drivers.pdf) that from 2003 to 2012, truck drivers had work-incurred, nonfatal injuries of which 13% were caused by “transportation incidents” categorized under overexertion and bodily reaction; falls, slips, and trips; and contact with objects or equipment. These statistics highlight the need to constantly be on the lookout for accident-causing issues and safety pitfalls.

When a driver or dock employee is loading [box trucks](https://www.truck-n-trailer.com/truck-vans/view-pre-owned-inventory/), please take the necessary precautions to minimize the risks of problems caused by inadvertent bodily contact with the truck or its attached equipment. Here are four tips to prevent the likelihood of accidents and injuries while ensuring that each of the loaded items is secure.

**Assess the Load Risk Situation**

Performing a load risk assessment enables truck drivers to address hazards before they become problems. Check for broken, unsecured, hazardous, or leaky items prior to loading them. Ensure that the box truck is safely parked, and decide how loading problems will be handled under inclement weather.

Box trucks need to be regularly maintained to ensure safe operating conditions. Vehicle restraints such as the parking brake or wheel chocks and other equipment should be regularly checked for wear and proper operation but more importantly, these items should be in good working order prior to loading cargo so there is no unsafe shifting or movement of the truck during the loading process.

Employers need to consider previous related accidents and determine the common hazards. Proper planning, prevention controls, and safety practices must be implemented for all box truck loading jobs. Refresher training and regular meetings and seminars on loading safety should be conducted as well.

**Consider Load Weight**

Load weight is a significant factor for ensuring the safe loading of your box truck. It is important to know the load capacity of the truck; consider shifting weights—such as stacking heavier loads on some parts of the truck or uneven mounting of the item on the surface—should be avoided. Ensure the even distribution of weight especially when the truck is not fully loaded. A critical rule to maintain stability and safety when loading the box truck is to park it firmly on level ground that is free of any kind of traffic and overhead cables.

The floor of the box truck body should be properly reinforced to accommodate the verified weight of the loads to be carried by the truck. Cargo areas can also be coated with non-slip flooring material to prevent accidents and keep the items in place.

**Execute the Correct Loading Process**

Loading box trucks can be done manually by using a two heeled dolly, pallet jack or with the assistance of a lift gate or conveyor. When loading boxes, a “last-in, and first-out” principle should be observed. Properly position the cargo that needs to be unloaded first on the floor and by the back door. Boxes also need to be arranged based on weight or size so they won’t slide around

All items should be wrapped or boxed properly and, if necessary, secured individually.

**Take Advantage of PPE and Safety Equipment**

To secure loads, use vertical supports, load bars, or load straps. To transport heavy loads, use hand trucks and pallet jacks. For easier loading, use ramps and dollies. Drivers and loaders need to be properly trained in the operation of such tools, regardless of how simple they may be. Using a dolly might sound simple, but accidental mistakes from not being diligent with safety procedures can have a costly outcome.

When necessary, wear personal protective equipment such as harness systems, safety glasses, gloves, wrist guards, steel-toed footwear, and high-visibility clothing when loading the box truck.

\*\*\*

Loading a box truck requires a safety process in an effort to aim for a goal of zero incidents when it comes to driver and cargo safety. Truck drivers should be encouraged not only to report the hazards they encounter on the job but also provide feedback on these procedures.