

Toolbox Talks

LIFTGATE SAFETY

Liftgates can be hazardous if not operated in a safe manner and should only be operated by those who have been properly trained.

General Liftgate Safety

- Common liftgate injuries include amputated fingers and toes, crushed feet, falling off the liftgate, and getting hit by falling objects.
- Leaving the liftgate extended at truck bed level, unattended, can create a hazard for pedestrians. To mitigate this hazard, put the liftgate all the way up in the vertical position or leave it flat on the ground.
- Mark the corners of the tailgate with traffic cones, or flashing lights.
- Never back two liftgates up to each other to transfer items. This can create a serious fall hazard. Load the items onto the tailgate of the first truck, lower them to ground level, and transfer them to the tailgate of the second truck.
- Keep hands and feet clear of all pinch points.
- Do not use the liftgate for any purpose other than to lift or lower cargo from the truck.
- Know the weight of your freight and liftgate capacity. Do not overload.
- If your truck does not have cart stops, chocks should always be used to keep items from rolling or moving while loading items in and out of the truck.
- Keep the liftgate free of oil, grease, and other slippery substances.
- Set the vehicle brakes and whenever possible operate the liftgate on a level surface.



Pre-operations

- Ensure the liftgate has been maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Read the liftgate operator's manual and follow the instructions provided.
- Pay attention to safety warning decals and ensure the decals are in place and legible.

- Visually inspect the liftgate daily as part of the vehicle inspection and report any deficiencies.
- Do not use the liftgate if there are signs of abuse, or if it fails to operate properly.
- Before running the liftgate loaded, run it empty through its full range to verify that it will provide a good landing area for the freight.
- The liftgate and truck bed should form a uniformly flat surface so freight will roll easily in and out of the truck.

Operations

- Position the load on the liftgate and place chocks behind the wheels to prevent them from rolling.
- Secure top-heavy loads with straps.
- Assign one employee to coordinate communication between all employees working to load, lower, or elevate a load.
- Ensure the liftgate is completely stopped before loading/unloading cargo.
- Get help with heavier loads to prevent runaway cargo.
- Never sacrifice yourself for any runaway cargo; have an escape plan to keep from getting hurt.
- Workers should be focused on the liftgate zone, without distractions, at all times.
- Warn nearby personnel when raising and lowering the liftgate. Insist bystanders keep their distance.