
Warehouse Loading Dock Restraint (Dok Lok) Visual Inspection

1.0 Objective & Intent

The objective of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish a mandatory, standardized visual inspection protocol for Dok Lok vehicle restraints installed at warehouse loading docks. The intent is to prevent catastrophic accidents caused by trailer creep, unexpected trailer departure, or restraint failure during loading and unloading operations. This procedure directly mitigates the risk of falls from height, crushing injuries, and struck-by incidents, aligning with WorkSafeBC OHS Regulation Part 12 (Conveyors, Cranes, and Hoists) and Part 16 (Mobile Equipment) requirements for securing vehicles at loading docks.

2.0 Operational Scope

This procedure applies to all warehouse loading dock positions equipped with Dok Lok or similar automatic vehicle restraint systems. It is mandatory for all forklift operators, dock attendants, warehouse supervisors, and maintenance personnel who operate, inspect, or maintain loading dock equipment. The inspection must be performed at the start of each shift, before the first trailer is docked, and after any reported impact, malfunction, or near-miss event involving the restraint system.

3.0 Hazard Identification & Mandatory PPE

- Crushing Hazard: Trailer creep or sudden departure can crush personnel between the trailer and dock face.
- Fall Hazard: Unrestrained trailers can pull away, causing dock workers to fall from the dock edge or trailer floor.
- Struck-by Hazard: A failed restraint hook or bar can recoil or break, striking nearby workers.
- Pinch Points: Moving restraint arms, pivot points, and hydraulic cylinders can cause severe hand and finger injuries.
- CSA-Approved Steel Toed Boots with puncture-resistant soles
- High-Visibility Safety Vest (Class 2 or higher) for dock area
- Safety Glasses with side shields (Z87.1 rated)
- Cut-Resistant Gloves (ANSI A4 or higher) for handling debris or sharp edges
- Hard Hat (Type I or II) when working below overhead obstructions or near dock levelers

4.0 Required Safety Equipment & Tools

- Dok Lok visual inspection checklist (printed or digital on SafeDesk)
- Flashlight (high-lumen, rechargeable) for inspecting dark or recessed components
- Measuring tape or gap gauge to verify hook engagement clearance
- Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) kit with personal lock and hasp for maintenance isolation
- Warning cones or barricade tape to cordon off the dock area during inspection
- Camera or mobile device for photo documentation of defects
- Spill kit (if hydraulic fluid leaks are possible)

5.0 Step-by-Step Safety Procedure

1. Cordon off the dock position with warning cones and barricade tape. Post a visible sign indicating 'Inspection in Progress – Do Not Operate.' Notify all dock personnel that the restraint is out of service until the inspection is complete.
2. Perform a visual walk-around of the Dok Lok unit. Check for any obvious signs of damage, such as bent or cracked housing, broken welds, missing bolts, or hydraulic fluid leaks on the ground or on the unit itself.
3. Inspect the restraint hook or bar assembly. Verify that the hook is not deformed, worn beyond manufacturer specifications, or missing its rubber bumper. Ensure the hook pivots freely without binding and returns to the fully retracted (stowed) position.
4. Examine the mounting brackets and anchor bolts. Confirm that all bolts are present, tight, and free of corrosion. Use a flashlight to inspect the welds on the brackets for any hairline cracks or signs of fatigue.
5. Check the hydraulic or pneumatic lines (if applicable). Look for cracks, abrasions, kinks, or loose fittings. Ensure that no lines are rubbing against sharp edges or moving parts. If fluid is present, identify the source and contain with a spill kit.
6. Test the restraint activation and release mechanism. With the dock leveler in the stored position, activate the Dok Lok control (button or pull chain) and observe the hook extend fully. Verify that the hook engages the trailer's rear impact guard (RIG) bar correctly. Then release and confirm full retraction.
7. Inspect the electrical components and wiring. Look for frayed wires, loose connections, or signs of overheating (discoloration, melting). Ensure that the control panel indicator lights (red/green) function correctly and match the hook position.
8. Document all findings on the inspection checklist. For any defects, take clear photos and tag the unit with a 'Do Not Operate' lockout tag. Immediately report the issue to the warehouse supervisor and initiate a maintenance work order. Do not return the dock to service until the restraint is repaired and re-inspected.

Regulatory Disclaimer: This document is a generic safety template provided for educational and informational purposes only. It does not constitute professional engineering, legal, or regulatory compliance advice. The end-user assumes all liability for validating all safety protocols against specific machinery manufacturer manuals and local occupational health and safety regulations (e.g., WorkSafeBC, CSA standards) before deployment.