

SPOT THE SAFETY VIOLATION: Jack up Vehicles Safely



Imagine the consequences for this worker if either of these boards was knocked over or fell'

[learn_more caption="ANSWER"]

A key element of workplace safety is using the right equipment for the job. In this picture, the worker should be using one or more jacks to elevate the truck and proper blocks to help support its weight. Propping the truck up with a couple of 2x4s is very dangerous, especially since one of the boards is directly behind the worker. He could easily bump the board and knock it out of place, causing the truck to collapse on top of him.

8 Jack Safety Tips

Workers in various industries may have to repair or perform maintenance on a car, truck or other vehicle or piece of [powered mobile equipment](#). Often, this work requires the worker to get underneath the vehicle or equipment. In many cases, the worker should use a jack to elevate the vehicle or equipment. (In some cases, a vehicle hoist may be needed).

Of course, using a jack incorrectly is just as unsafe as using a few pieces of wood.

For example, according to a [BC hazard alert](#), the front end of a semi-truck was jacked up and left supported by a pair of jack stands. The jack stands failed while a worker was underneath it. One side of the front end dropped onto him, causing serious crushing injuries. An investigation found that none of the workers knew the weight of the truck's front end (6 tonnes), where to find that information or the rated capacity of the jack stands that were used (3 tonnes).

To safely use jacks in the workplace, follow these eight tips:

- Determine the weight of a vehicle or equipment before jacking it up. And then choose jacks that can safely support that weight.
- Check the manufacturer's instructions and the safety labels on the jacks themselves to confirm their capacity. Note that most jack stands must be used in pairs to achieve their rated capacity.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for using the jacks safely. If the instructions aren't available, contact the manufacturer or get written instructions from an engineer.
- Ensure that jacks are assembled and used by qualified workers.
- The jacks should be placed on solid, level ground. If the ground is soft, ensure the jack is supported by a block.
- Ensure that the lifting end of the jack presses against a solid part of the load or is correctly fitted into the lifting points indicated in the jacking instructions, which may be found on vehicle or equipment decals or on the jack itself.
- Use axle stands, blocks or ramps to support the load securely once it's up. Don't use cinder blocks or concrete, which may crack under the weight.
- Once suspended, vehicles and equipment should be properly immobilized or secured against accidental

movement. Otherwise, they could fall on workers underneath them. For example, a worker in Ontario was replacing a tire on an excavator using two jacks to lift its rear. There were no other stands supporting the vehicle. While he was underneath, the excavator tipped off the jacks, fatally crushing him. The company and its president pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that the excavator was securely and solidly blocked to prevent it from moving or falling on the worker. The court fined the company \$75,000 and the president \$10,000 [[Holmes Tire Inc. and Michael Holmes](#), Govt. News Release, Aug. 14, 2012].

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