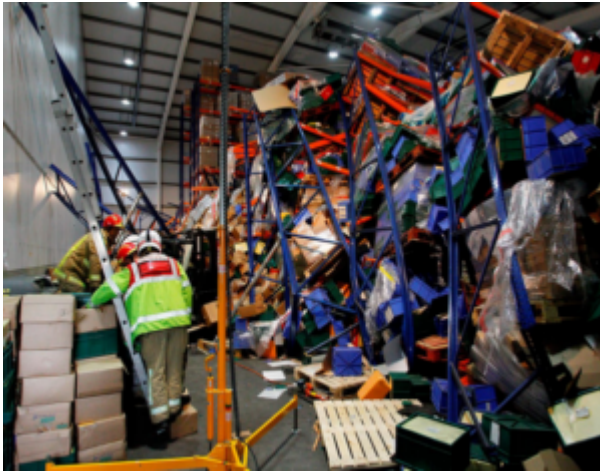
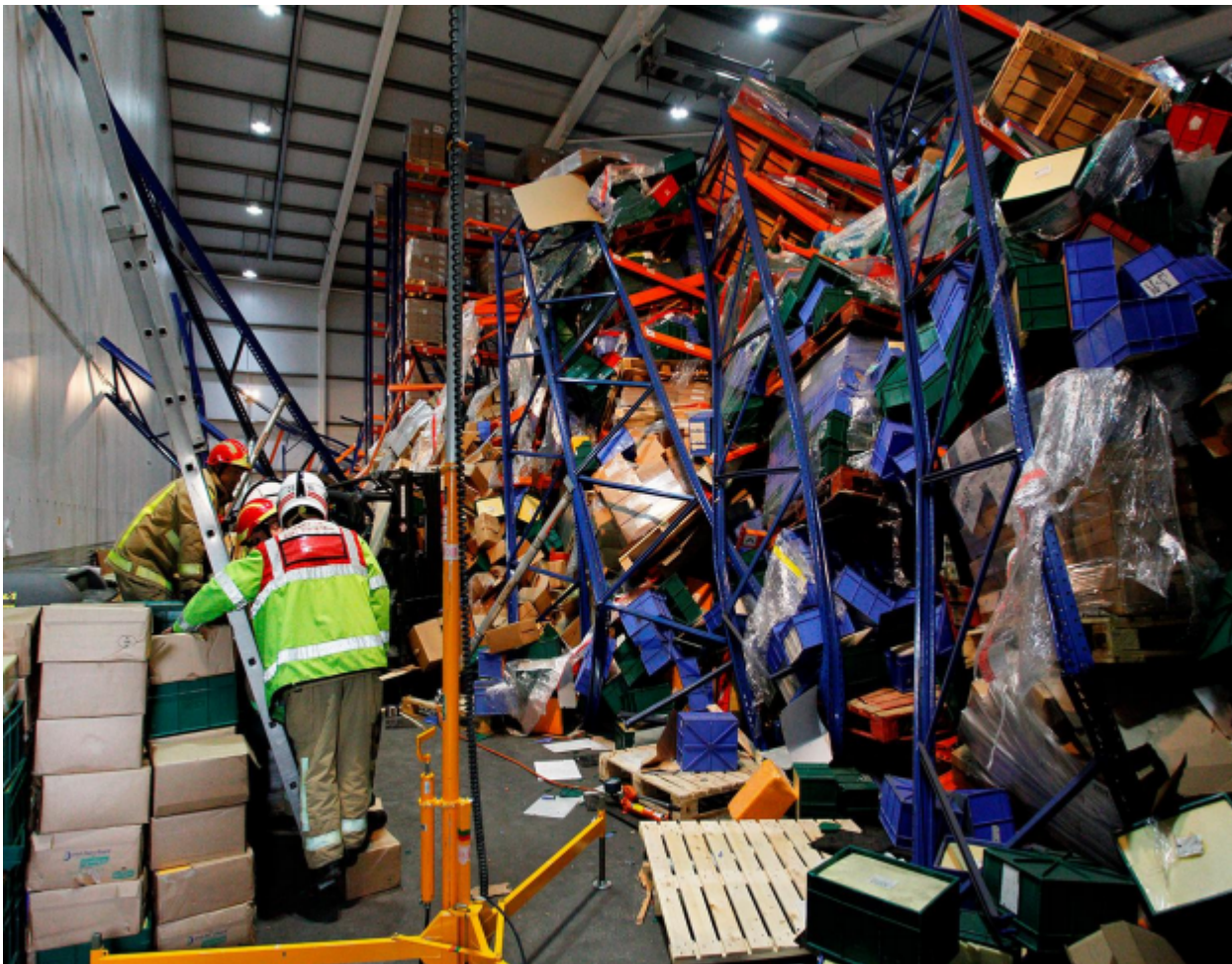


# Spot The Safety Violation: Storage Rack Collapse Buries Worker



These storage racks collapsed and buried a worker underneath hundreds of pounds of cheese and metal shelving. How could this incident have been prevented'



Workplaces such as warehouses, distribution centres and manufacturing plants regularly use racks to store materials, goods, etc. Storage racks help keep the workplace clean and organized, and allow for the safe movement of workers and mobile equipment. But if racks aren't installed and used correctly or are

improperly maintained, they can endanger workers.

This picture shows the aftermath of the collapse of 18 metre tall metal storage racks in a warehouse in England. The racks held 20kg blocks of cheese. It's unclear exactly why the shelving collapsed, but being overloaded may have contributed to the incident, which is under investigation by OHS officials.

When the storage racks collapsed like dominoes, workers ran for safety but a worker on a forklift was unable to escape. He was buried in the rubble for more than eight hours before rescuers were able to pull him out. They believe that the protective cab of his forklift saved his life. The worker suffered only minor injuries in the incident.

## 10 RACK SAFETY TIPS

Each jurisdictions' OHS regulations cover the safe storage of materials, including the safe use of storage racks. You should always comply with the specific requirements for racks in your jurisdiction. But following these basic rack safety tips from Safe Work Manitoba's Guideline for Industrial Steel Storage Racks will help ensure compliance and will protect workers:

1. When buying storage racks, ensure durability and protection features are built into the design.
2. Ensure the structural integrity of the walls and floors before installing your storage rack.
3. Install storage racks according to the manufacturer's specifications. If racks are improperly installed, they can endanger workers.
4. Ensure the aisles around the storage rack are wide enough to accommodate a lift truck's turning radius and for the safe operation of powered mobile equipment such as forklifts in general.
5. Conduct regular inspections, maintenance and repairs of storage racks. (Use this checklist to inspect the storage racks in your workplace to ensure that they're safe.)
6. Look for scratched paint, dents and bowed out components.
7. Ensure you use your storage rack according to the manufacturer's specifications.
8. Train workers to load storage racks properly. For example, bar workers from overloading racks beyond their safe load limits.
9. Conduct rack safety training for all workers and encourage them to report bangs, dents and any damage to storage racks as soon as is practical and discipline them appropriately when they don't.

*Example:* A forklift operator drove into and seriously damaged a storage rack. He didn't report the incident, which was discovered on the next shift, and he falsified documents to cover it up. So the employer fired him. And an arbitrator upheld his termination as justified [Winners Merchants Intl LP v. Workers United Canada Council, Local 152, [2013] CanLII 74235 (ON LA), Nov. 25, 2013].

10. Retrain lift truck and power mobile equipment drivers as required to ensure they can safely operate such equipment around storage racks.