

Warehouse Staff Training SOP

SOP · UK · Updated 2026-08-09 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A warehouse staff training SOP is the written procedure for how a warehouse trains its people: the safety induction every starter completes before working the floor, how authorisation to operate forklifts and other equipment is granted, how pick and pack accuracy is trained and verified, and how all of it is recorded.

Warehouses concentrate the risks that make training a legal duty rather than a nicety — manual handling, moving vehicles, loads at height — and they run on agency labour at exactly the moments when training discipline is hardest to hold. A written SOP keeps the standard identical for the starter on a quiet Tuesday in March and the fortieth agency worker on a Friday in peak.

This template is the warehouse-specialised version of our general staff training SOP: safety-first induction, a written equipment authorisation system, accuracy training for pick and pack, agency worker onboarding, and a toolbox talk cadence — with the records that evidence each one.

Purpose and scope

This SOP sets out how [Your company] trains warehouse staff at [site(s)]: the safety induction completed before anyone works the floor, how authorisation to operate equipment is granted and recorded, how pick and pack accuracy is trained and checked, and how agency and temporary workers are brought to the same standard.

It applies to everyone who works in the warehouse — permanent staff, new starters, and agency and temporary workers — and adds the warehouse-specific detail on top of our general staff training procedure.

Roles and responsibilities

- Procedure owner ([name/role, e.g. warehouse manager]): keeps this SOP, the training matrix, and the equipment authorisation register current, and reviews all three after any incident.
- Shift managers and team leaders: check that no one on their shift performs a task or operates equipment they are not signed off for, deliver toolbox talks, and correct unsafe practice on the spot.
- Trainers and nominated buddies: deliver the training assigned to them, check understanding honestly, and refuse to sign off anyone who is not yet safe or accurate.
- All warehouse staff: work within their training and authorisations, wear the PPE issued, and report near-misses, damage, and errors rather than hiding them.

Safety induction — before the first shift on the floor

No one works the warehouse floor until the induction below is complete. This is not paperwork to catch up on later: your health and safety regulator expects training to happen before exposure to the risk, not after.

- Site rules and layout: walking routes, pedestrian and vehicle segregation, exclusion zones around racking, loading docks and [charging areas], and what the floor markings mean.
-

Emergency arrangements: fire exits and assembly points, first aiders, spill response, and how to raise the alarm from anywhere in the building.

- Manual handling: training on the technique and task assessments in our manual handling procedure before any handling task is assigned — warehouses are where handling injuries concentrate.
- PPE: [Your company] issues the PPE the risk assessment requires for the role — [e.g. safety footwear, hi-vis, gloves] — at no cost to the worker, with instruction on when it is mandatory and how to report damaged or ill-fitting kit.
- Reporting: how to report accidents, near-misses, and damaged racking or equipment — and the rule that nobody gets in trouble for reporting.
- Equipment: an explicit statement that operating any mechanical handling equipment (MHE) without written authorisation is a disciplinary matter, however experienced the starter says they are.

Equipment training and authorisation (MHE)

Forklifts and other MHE are the highest-consequence risk in most warehouses, and regulators treat operator training as non-negotiable. [Your company] runs a written authorisation system: training alone does not permit operation — authorisation does.

1. Train in three stages: basic operating skills ([usually via an accredited external trainer]), job-specific training on our equipment, loads and layout, and supervised familiarisation on the floor.
2. Verify, do not accept: certificates from previous employers or agencies are checked with the issuer, and the operator is assessed on our equipment before any authorisation is granted.
3. Record a written authorisation per person per equipment type in the authorisation register in [system/location], signed by [name/role], with a review date.
4. Control access: [keys/fobs/codes] are issued to authorised operators only, and the register is the single source of truth for who may operate what.
5. Suspend authorisation after an incident, a near-miss, observed unsafe operation, or [number] months away from the equipment — retraining and reassessment before it is restored.
6. Re-evaluate operators on the cycle your regulator sets or recommends — check current guidance rather than assuming, as some regulators require re-evaluation on a fixed cycle.

Pick, pack and despatch accuracy training

1. Train the system first: locations, [scanner/WMS] use, pick paths, and what to do when stock, location, or quantity does not match the screen.
2. Pick supervised: new pickers work [number] shifts alongside an experienced colleague, with every order checked before despatch.
3. Measure before sign-off: release to unsupervised picking only when accuracy over the supervised period meets [standard, e.g. 99.5%] — speed targets apply after accuracy, never before.
4. Train packing to the despatch standard: correct cartons and fill, labelling, rules for fragile and [hazardous/regulated] items, and load stability for the vehicle.
- 5.

Feed errors back: mispicks and despatch errors are traced to the person and the cause, and coaching happens within [number] days — errors are training data, not just performance data.

Agency and temporary workers

Agency workers do the same work in the same aisles, so they get the same safety induction. Regulators treat their safety as a responsibility shared between [Your company] and the supplying agency — "the agency trained them" is not a position either party can rely on.

- Every agency worker completes the safety induction in this SOP before their first task, however short the assignment.
- Tell the agency in advance what the role involves — tasks, equipment, PPE — so they supply people who are fit for it and already briefed on the basics.
- Claimed equipment qualifications are verified exactly as for permanent staff before any MHE authorisation. [Most agency workers will not be authorised at all — if so, say that plainly at induction.]
- A shortened job-specific programme is acceptable for a short assignment; a shortened safety induction never is.
- Records for agency workers are kept the same way as for employees, in [system/location].

Toolbox talks and refresher training

- A toolbox talk runs [weekly/fortnightly] per shift, kept to [five–ten] minutes: one topic each, drawn from recent near-misses, seasonal risks ([peak volumes, weather, new lines]), or the rolling topic list.
- Attendance is recorded — as far as an inspector is concerned, a talk with no record did not happen.
- Safety-critical topics — manual handling, MHE, emergency procedures — are refreshed on the cycle in the training matrix, at least every [twelve months], or sooner where a risk assessment or regulator guidance requires it.
- Out-of-cycle refreshers run after an incident, after material changes to layout or equipment, and for anyone returning from [number] weeks' absence.

Training records

For each person who works in the warehouse, [Your company] keeps:

- Their completed safety induction, signed and dated by trainer and trainee.
- Equipment authorisations: equipment type, training and assessment dates, who evaluated, and the review date — the register an inspector will ask for first after an MHE incident.
- Job-specific and refresher training, with dates, the content version, and how understanding or accuracy was checked.
- Toolbox talk attendance.
- Records live in [system/location], are retained for [duration], and can be produced during an inspection without notice.

Review and ownership

[Name/role] owns this SOP. It is reviewed every [twelve months] and after any reportable incident, layout change, or new equipment type. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Build the warehouse training matrix first — every role against its required topics, safety-critical ones at the top — and hang the rest of the SOP off it.
2. List every piece of MHE on site, name who signs authorisations, and set up the authorisation register before training anyone against it.
3. Set the pick accuracy standard and supervised period from your own error data, not a number that merely sounds impressive.
4. Agree the agency induction flow with your agencies before peak season — negotiating it mid-peak is how steps get skipped.
5. Check your health and safety regulator's current guidance on operator training and evaluation cycles, then replace every [bracketed placeholder] and publish.

Official guidance

- › [HSE — Warehousing and storage](#)
- › [HSE — Lift-truck operator training](#)
- › [OSHA — Powered industrial trucks](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/warehouse-staff-training-sop> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.