

TARPING

Oftentimes, it is necessary to tarp a load. Although this is a common practice, it is a frequent cause of mishaps that lead to injury. One of the greatest risks of accidents occurs when lifting and moving tarps. Because most tarps are quite heavy and cumbersome, they are rather difficult to handle and especially to lift. For this reason, it is always advisable to get assistance. Many times the dock workers will assist you in lifting the tarp either by hand or by machine.

If you do need to lift the tarp alone, it is a good idea to partially unfold or unroll the tarp so you will only have to lift part of it at a time (such as one side and then the other). Always remember to keep your back straight and lift with your legs.

Another dangerous situation can be spreading or unrolling a tarp when it is windy. If there is even a moderate breeze, it is safer to ask for help rather than risk an injury by being blown off a trailer or tossed into the side of a load. If no help is available, you may want to open a small amount of tarp and tie that part down before spreading or unrolling the tarp any further. Or better yet, ask your dispatcher if you can wait until you reach an area with less wind or where help is available.

Unrolling a tarp while walking on your load or trailer can be extremely dangerous. NEVER walk backwards and pull the tarp towards you as you cannot see the edges of the load and it is very easy to step off the end or side of the trailer or load. Walk facing the direction in which you are unrolling the tarp so you can see where you are stepping at all times.

Frequently, a tarp is equipped with rubber tie-downs that hold the tarp tight to the side rails or frame. It is a good idea to stand to the side when stretching these straps as they could “snap” and cause an injury (especially to the face and eyes).

One last suggestion, if you are working alongside your trailer on a roadway or in an area where equipment is being operated, don't forget to look before you step back.

These few reminders, if followed, should make the job of tarping not only easier but also a lot safer. Keeping your wits about you and thinking before you act will go far in assuming the job will be done safely and correctly.

Date