



Pedestrians, cyclists may endanger themselves in loading dock areas

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Hurrying, texting, cutting behind or in front of trucks can be hazardous

Summary

You're late for a meeting in another building. Spotting a door just beyond a loading dock, you take a shortcut through the area. There's a truck backing in to make a delivery. You step up your pace, thinking the driver sees you--but he doesn't. It's a scene that concerns teamsters and others who work or make deliveries at the many loading docks at PNNL buildings. While no one has been hurt, staff members at the Richland campus have reported seeing the potential for accidents involving trucks in loading zones and passersby.

Lessons Learned: Pedestrians do not have the right-of-way in a loading zone. The area immediately behind a truck is not visible in the mirrors and drivers may not see individuals crossing immediately in front of their trucks, either. Cutting across dock areas--especially when distracted by a handheld device--can be hazardous. Parking in a loading dock area can interfere with business traffic.



Details

Nearly all buildings on PNNL's campus have loading docks close to an entryway. Passersby often take the shortest route to the door, crossing dock areas and potentially endangering themselves if trucks or forklifts are operating--especially in areas where dumpsters and recycle bins create tight quarters and reduce visibility for moving drivers. Many staff members have taken such routes for years. Teamsters and others who work or deliver in dock areas are expressing concerns about potentially dangerous situations when pedestrians walk in front of or behind delivery trucks when deliveries are underway. The hazardous behaviors noted include:

- Pedestrians who cut through loading zones in busy dock areas seemingly unaware of blind spots in front and in back of moving vehicles;
- Bicyclists who do not stop or slow down or stop for maneuvering trucks or other vehicles;



- Staff members who temporarily park cars in dock areas, sometimes hampering maneuverability for trucks.

Lessons Learned

Loading docks at PNNL buildings can be busy places at certain times of the day. Staff members seeking to enter buildings will be safer by waiting or going around such zones rather than taking shortcuts through them. PNNL staff members should take personal responsibility for themselves and their coworkers. The following suggestions were offered by concerned staff members:

- **Avoid crossing loading zones.** Be aware of moving vehicles and other activity in dock areas.
- **Make sure truck drivers see you.** When focused on backing up to a loading dock, teamsters and other drivers may not notice you. If you can't see a mirror when behind a truck, the driver can't see you. If you're immediately in front of a truck, the driver may not be able to see over the hood. Wait or walk around, rather than trying to beat the truck.
- **Remain alert.** Avoid using handheld devices when walking around campus. Practice situational awareness. Be alert to alarms on forklifts and trucks that beep as a reminder that drivers are backing up and may not see you.
- **Park in designated areas only.** Temporarily leaving your vehicle in a loading zone can make it more difficult and hazardous for drivers to maneuver.

For HDI requirements, see "Accessing Workspaces" in Section 5. Prepare for Work, Maintaining Workspaces, and Performing Work in the Basic Staff Practices work control.

If you have questions about this article or have a lesson to share, please contact the Operating Experience / Lessons Learned Program Manager, [Patti Ammonet](#) at 375-2275