



A laydown yard is an area outside at a worksite where tools, materials, equipment, vehicles, etc., are stored until they need to be used. They are most common on construction sites, but other operations, such as manufacturing or oil field operations, have them as well. There can be many hazards to employees as well as property loss incidents in these areas.

Hazards of Laydown Yards

There can be a long list of hazards present in a laydown yard depending on what is stored there and the operations that take place in and around them.

Some common hazards to consider:

- **Slip, trip, and fall hazards-** One of the most common hazards present in laydown yards with poor organization are slip, trip, and fall hazards. When the items stored in the laydown yard are poorly organized or just thrown everywhere, workers who must navigate the area are more likely to experience a slip, trip, or fall.
- **Struck-by hazards-** Laydown yards often have equipment moving in and out of them throughout the day. Moving equipment presents a struck by hazard for any workers in the area.
- **Biological hazards-** Insects and animals are not often considered when discussing the hazards of a laydown yard. Critters such as snakes, ticks, spiders, bees, wasps, raccoons,

etc., love the shelter of equipment and materials stored in these areas.

Other Considerations

- **Theft-** The items in laydown yards can be an easy target for theft, depending on how they are set up.
- **Property damage-** Since many of the tools, equipment, and materials are stored in this one central location at a worksite, property damage can easily occur. Moving vehicles or heavy equipment can strike or run over these items if they are not properly organized or if the operators are not careful navigating through a laydown yard.

Laydown Yard Hazard Elimination

For the hazards mentioned, the single best practice to eliminate them is to have good organization and housekeeping in any laydown yard at a worksite. Proper organization will eliminate many slip, trip, and fall hazards. A laydown yard that is well-organized will also help to eliminate struck-by hazards for workers in the area as well as the items stored in the area. Biological hazards can be a little more difficult to avoid, but inspecting any items you plan on moving prior to doing so can make the difference in whether you are exposed to them.

Lay Down Yard Organization Best Practices

The available space for a laydown yard, any operations occurring within the laydown yard, the items being stored there, and the frequency of the items being moved in and out of the yard will dictate the best way to set it up.

Some general effective best practices for laydown yard setup:

- Have plenty of space between equipment/ materials that need to be moved frequently.
- Place items that are not needed soon or frequently out of the way of items that need to be accessed more often.

- **Leave walking paths** for workers to access items.
- Place caution tape or other barriers to keep people out of hazardous areas or where heavy equipment travels.
- Discard any items that are deemed unrepairable or trash to avoid unnecessary clutter.
- Periodically inspect and reevaluate laydown yards to improve on their setup.

To prevent theft there are several measures that can be taken. The most obvious measure is to have a secure fence around the laydown yard. Depending on what is stored in the laydown yard, barbed wire and a fence cover may need to be used as well. **Any item stored in a laydown yard should never be placed right against the fence.**

Always lock up laydown yards at the end of the shift. Another best practice is never to discuss the items that are stored at a worksite with individuals who do not work there. The knowledge that certain items are at a worksite can entice someone to break in.

Summary

Laydown yards often get neglected due to everyone's attention being put toward the actual work being completed. Because of this neglect, these areas can be full of unnecessary hazards that result in injuries to the workers who must enter them. Costly property damage and theft can also occur if the proper steps are not taken to protect the items stored in these areas.