

New regulations take effect January 1, 2018, for steel storage racks.

New storage-rack regulations coming soon

By Jesse Marchand

There are new amendments to the Regulation on storage racks that will take effect January 1, 2018. You'll find these new regulations in section 4.43.1 and in Part 4: General Conditions. Here's what you need to know.

What do you mean by storage racks?

The new section 4.43.1 applies to steel storage racks — those made of steel frames, beams, and associated accessories and assembled into a structure meant to support materials and products. For example, the most common types of steel storage racks affected by these regulations are pallet racks and cantilever racks — equipment commonly used in many industries and workplaces.

Exemptions to the new regulations are steel storage racks under 8 ft (about 2.4 m) in height, where the materials are loaded or unloaded off the storage rack manually by workers. Also, if you have shelving or display fixtures in a retail environment, this new section will not apply; regulations for these types of storage

racks are already covered under general sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.8, and 4.43.

Why are these amendments happening?

The new regulations are not entirely new requirements, but were previously not specific to these kinds of storage racks. The new regulations ensure that employers have a clear understanding of their responsibility to ensure storage racks are properly designed, installed, used, and maintained. If these things are not ensured, there is a risk of catastrophic failure, which can cause serious injuries or fatalities.

The new regulations will benefit employers and workers by providing:

- Specific safety requirements for proper installation, inspection, use, and maintenance of racks
- Consistent interpretation and application of requirements
- Racks that are installed and used in safe manner
- Prevention of incidents, injuries, lost time, and unforeseen expenses

What's new?

The new regulations will be posted to worksafebc.com on January 1. In the meantime, here's what you need to know:

- Storage racks must be installed or uninstalled by a qualified person.
- Rack inspections must be conducted by a qualified person.
- Instructions for safely loading, unloading, and maintaining storage racks must be available to workers in the workplace.
- Rated capacities of storage racks must be clearly posted near the racks and be visible to workers.
- Structural modifications, including reconfigurations, repairs, and replacement of components must be conducted in accordance with the specification of the manufacturer or a professional engineer.

What can I do to prepare for the new regulations?

First, you will need to ensure that your company's storage racks are capable of safely supporting the items on them. If you haven't inspected your storage racks recently, you should start to assess the condition of all storage racks in your workplace to make sure that none exhibit moderate- to high-risk conditions and that there is no immediate danger. A qualified person needs to inspect the storage racks and document the results of the inspection. Examples of moderate- to high-risk conditions are:

- Storage racks that are overloaded
- Storage racks that have damage or corrosion or are in disrepair
- Evidence of questionable repairs
- Missing or incompatible parts
- Unsafe loading practices (e.g., load overhang, loads not secured/wrapped properly, unstable loads)

Do you know the manufacturer of your rack? The Regulation stipulates that all your storage racks be designed and constructed in accordance with good engineering practice, and used in accordance with the specifications and instructions of the manufacturer or a professional engineer. They also need to be installed and uninstalled by a qualified person and any structural modification, including reconfiguration, of

the storage rack must be carried out in accordance with the specifications of the manufacturer or a professional engineer.

If you have pre-installed racks, you should gather what information you can on the manufacturer. If you don't know the manufacturer, look for any product identification on the storage rack (e.g., stickers or embossed markings) that may help you identify the manufacturer or the date it was manufactured. If that doesn't work, ask local manufacturers, distributors, or engineers for assistance.

After inspecting all of your racks, you should develop a risk-based action plan with short-, medium-, and long-term goals. Racks in poor condition should be addressed first to ensure racks are safe for workers. And racks in frequent use and those that carry hazardous products or heavy items should also be prioritized.

If you don't have one already, you should begin developing and implementing a rack inspection and maintenance program to keep your racks safe.

Where can I get more information?

The WorkSafeBC website has a variety of resources that can help you prepare for these changes. You can find them by searching for "storage racks" on worksafebc.com. These include:

- [The OHS Guideline G4.43.1](#)
- [Frequently asked questions on storage rack regulations](#)
- [Regulatory change: A primer on new storage rack regulations](#)
- [Pallet Rack Inspection Checklist](#) 📄



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