



Load Data on Load Notices Technical Bulletin

Storage Equipment Manufacturers Association www.sema.org.co.uk

Racking and shelving are considered to be work equipment and, therefore, are covered by the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) which requires, amongst other things;

- That the equipment should be inspected and maintained in good working condition,
- That people operating work equipment are given adequate training in the correct use of the equipment,
- That employees are given necessary health and safety information.

Paragraph 634 of the HSE publication “Warehousing and storage – A guide to health and safety” HSG76 states that “Racking should have a clear unambiguous notice securely fixed to it, stating the maximum load together with any necessary specified load configurations”, and goes on to refer to the SEMA publication on Load Notices.

So, HSE recommends that there should be a load notice on racking/shelving so that employees have the information to operate the racking system safely and the SEMA load notice is the easiest way of complying.

The load notice doesn’t just give information about Safe Working Loads (SWL), there are also important instructions and information about the general usage of the racking/shelving e.g. prohibitions about altering or climbing the racking as well as an instruction to report damage and signposts to information sources.

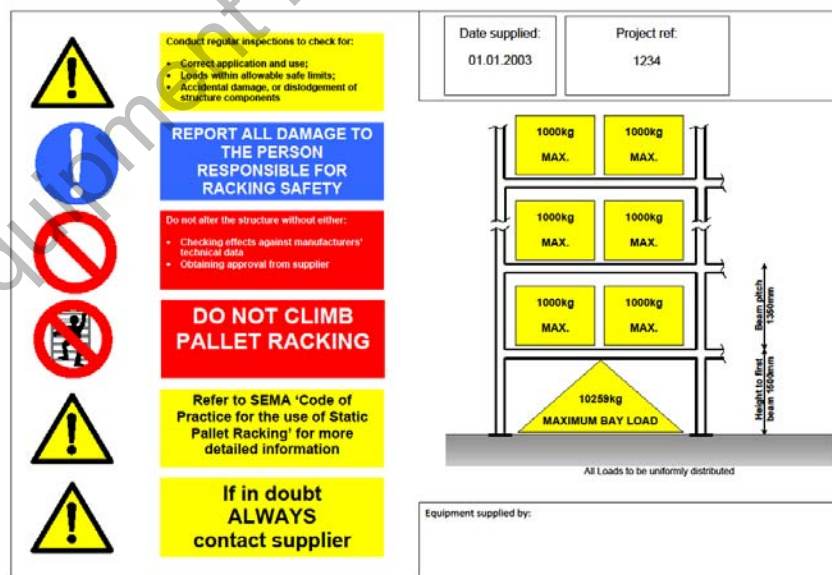


Figure 1 Typical adjustable pallet racking load notice

The best source of SWL data for racking or shelving is from the racking/shelving supplier. The load capacity of pallet racking and shelving is normally determined by the product manufacturer using a combination of structural theory, codes of practice and component testing.

Provided that the racking/shelving manufacturer is trading then they, or their agents, should be able to provide load data. However, this might not always be the case as some companies do not offer this support, some will only provide support to the original purchaser and some may no longer support legacy products. The need for product support should be considered when planning the system. Racking and shelving suppliers will often require that they carry out an inspection of the racking/shelving to make sure that is the correct product, ensure that the condition is acceptable, and that the equipment is installed correctly, although some will require that the organisation making the request complies with the original equipment manufacturer's supply and installation conditions. If load data is not supplied by the manufacturer or their agent then the company/individual providing the load data should be suitably qualified and insured to do so.

If the racking/shelving manufacturer is no longer trading or cannot provide load data then it might be possible to get load data from a storage equipment Consultant. Some Consultants might be able to derive load data as the original manufacturer would have done; this is likely to be a time-consuming and costly task.

The end-User must not alter the load notice.

Full scale testing is not recommended due to the risks involved in the process. Even a small rack with two 1t pallets per beam and three beam levels will be carrying 6t at working load and would likely have the top beam level at around 5.5m. Any full-scale load test must be accompanied by a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks involved. Full scale load tests can also be expensive and time consuming as, in order to get meaningful data, the results of the test need to be interpreted which, is a skilled job.

Load data for low-rise shelving (less than 3m) can be derived from test but, again, a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks involved must be carried out. Guidance is available in SEMA and European codes.