

## EXPLORING THE BENEFITS OF POWERCHOCK VEHICLE RESTRAINTS

Warehouse Services Inc (WSI) is a privately held warehouse services company and third-party logistics provider that manages large-scale logistics activities on behalf of major corporations throughout North America. Recently we had the pleasure of speaking with Rich Hann, Maintenance Manager at WSI. Rich talks about the use of GMR Safety equipment at a massive facility in Illinois.



Warehouse Services Inc (WSI) ensures the safety of loading dock operators on site of a multinational company with the use of the POWERCHOCK 5 truck restraint system.

**GMR Safety:** Can you tell us when the warehouse was built and how many people are working there?

**Rich Hann:** The warehouse was built in 2015 and approximately 320 people work here, including both hourly and salary employees.

**GMR Safety:** Were there any specific challenges that you were facing with loading dock safety at your facility?

**Rich Hann:** Actually, the Powerchock vehicle restraints were installed as part of the original build; at facilities of this size, with high frequency loading / unloading operations, we need to take all necessary precautions to protect the warehouse staff. As you know, loading docks can be one of the most dangerous areas in the warehouse, if the employees are not protected by optimal safety equipment.

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**GMR Safety:** Yes indeed, there are unfortunately multiple risks associated with the unexpected movement of trucks and trailers at loading docks. We are therefore pleased to know that the safety of your employees is a primary concern at WSI. Have you ever used vehicle restraints at your other facilities?

**Rich Hann:** Yes, at some of our other facilities we have been using the common hook/ICC bar restraints. Here, we've been using the Powerchock vehicle restraints since 2015. All 132 loading docks are secured with the ergonomic model, the Powerchock 5, that comes with the articulated arm.

**GMR Safety:** It's interesting to see that the Powerchock units were installed right from the start here. Apart from vehicle restraints, have you implemented other safety measures to reduce the risk of loading docks accidents?

**Rich Hann:** Yes, indeed. For live loads, where the driver stays with the vehicle which remains attached to the semi, we require air lines to be disconnected, and we install a single-keyed glad-hand lock. We also use the glad-hand lock during regular loads and unloads to prevent unauthorized



attempts to hook up to the trailer. We also utilize jack stands and require that all trailers entering the yard slide their tandums to the rear for safer weight distribution while traveling in and out of the trailer with equipment.

**GMR Safety: Moving on to the benefits of using the Powerchock truck restraints, can you tell us about your experience with maintaining the Powerchock units?**

**Rich Hann:** I can say that 8 years of Powerchock usage has lower maintenance needs compared to the hook-based products that I have used or worked on at other facilities. Also, Powerchock vehicle restraints are designed so that our technical teams can easily handle maintenance, and it allows us to address any problem promptly and efficiently in-house meaning less downtime. For this reason, we haven't experienced any issues regarding the maintenance of the Powerchock units.

**GMR Safety: Were you expecting a reduction in maintenance costs or was it a pleasant surprise?**

**Rich Hann:** We hoped for lower maintenance costs but it was still a good surprise to see the Powerchock trailer restraints met expectations, because sometimes newer is not necessarily better.

**GMR Safety: The Powerchock wheel restraint system provides a visual and audible notification/alarm to both operators inside the building and drivers on the outside if the trailer is released. What benefits does this feature bring to your own operations?**

**Rich Hann:** In terms of loading dock operations safety, the addition of the audible alarm is definitely beneficial. It gives an extra notification besides the visual lights and a warning that's virtually impossible to ignore.

**GMR Safety: What advice would you give to other companies that are searching for safety solutions for their loading dock workers?**

**Rich Hann:** First and foremost, it is important to identify the specific needs and demands of a company's operations both from a functionality, economic and safety standpoint. From a market point of view, I support the use of GMR Safety products based on my experience because, as I said, they are designed to be user-friendly and there has been less maintenance required than with other restraining systems.

Another major aspect is the audio and visual communication system both inside and outside of the dock which confirms if the Powerchock is in place. In case of any unsafe maneuver by the driver while loading/unloading, the alarm goes off.

**GMR Safety: When it comes to safety matters affecting the workforce, you will agree that receiving feedback from the workers is crucial. What has been the response of the loading dock workers regarding the Powerchock wheel chocks?**

**Rich Hann:** Overall, the feedback from loading dock workers has been positive. They appreciate the system as they feel safe and can therefore focus on their tasks, resulting in improved efficiency.

GMR Safety has been very helpful and accommodating by providing literature, parts and assistance as needed. You are a very satisfying company to partner with.

**We'd like to thank Rich Hann for sharing his insights and experience with us.**



*The old ergonomic POWERCHOCK 5 model and articulated arm have been in operation for several years.*