

Freight Handler Job Description

A comprehensive job description template
for Australian logistics and freight businesses

Business Name: _____

Location: _____

Employment Type: _____

Reports To: _____

Date: _____

DISCLAIMER

This template is provided for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. It is designed to reflect Australian workplace standards and logistics industry practices at the time of publication. You should review and tailor this template to suit your business, operation type, applicable modern award and specific requirements. For complex situations, independent legal or HR advice should be sought. RosterElf Pty Ltd accepts no liability for any loss arising from reliance on this document.

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1. Position Overview

1.1 Position Title

Freight Handler / Dock Hand / Cargo Handler / Freight Loader

1.2 Position Summary

The Freight Handler is responsible for the physical handling, loading, unloading and sorting of freight and cargo in a warehouse or freight terminal. This role involves manual handling of goods, operating material handling equipment, ensuring freight is correctly sorted and documented, and maintaining a safe and efficient loading dock environment.

The position requires physical fitness, attention to detail, safety awareness and the ability to work as part of a team in a fast-paced freight environment.

1.3 Reporting Structure

This position reports to:

- Warehouse Supervisor / Dock Supervisor
- Operations Manager
- Shift Coordinator (during operations)

1.4 Employment Type

This position is available as:

- Casual (variable hours based on business needs)
- Part-time (regular rostered hours)
- Full-time (38 hours per week)

2. Key Responsibilities

2.1 Loading and Unloading Freight

- Unload freight from incoming trucks, trailers and shipping containers
- Load freight onto outgoing vehicles according to loading plans
- Use appropriate manual handling techniques for heavy or awkward items
- Secure loads with straps, chains or other restraints
- Maximize load space while maintaining freight safety
- Handle fragile and hazardous goods following proper procedures
- Work efficiently to meet dispatch deadlines

2.2 Sorting and Processing Shipments

- Sort incoming freight by destination, customer or route

- Scan barcodes and update freight tracking systems
- Check freight against consignment notes and manifests
- Segregate freight based on delivery schedules
- Identify and report discrepancies or missing items
- Consolidate shipments for efficient transport

2.3 Palletising and Packaging

- Build and wrap pallets for safe transport
- Use shrink wrap, strapping and other securing materials
- Stack freight according to weight and stability requirements
- Label pallets and packages correctly
- Repackage damaged or poorly packaged items
- Ensure all shipments are properly secured for transit

2.4 Documentation and Record Keeping

- Complete freight handling paperwork accurately
- Record receipt and dispatch of goods
- Use warehouse management systems and handheld scanners
- Report damages, shortages or discrepancies
- Maintain accurate records of freight movements
- Assist with stocktakes and inventory checks

2.5 Damage Inspection and Quality Control

- Inspect freight for damage upon receipt
- Document and photograph damaged goods
- Segregate damaged items for claims processing
- Report quality issues to supervisors
- Ensure only undamaged freight is dispatched
- Follow procedures for handling customer returns

2.6 Equipment Operation

- Operate forklifts, pallet jacks and hand trolleys safely
- Perform pre-start equipment checks
- Report equipment faults or maintenance needs
- Maintain equipment in clean and working condition
- Follow proper charging procedures for electric equipment
- Use loading dock equipment (tail lifts, dock levellers) safely

2.7 Safety and Housekeeping

- Follow all workplace health and safety procedures
- Wear required personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Keep loading dock and work areas clean and organized
- Identify and report hazards immediately
- Participate in safety meetings and toolbox talks
- Follow proper procedures for hazardous materials
- Ensure clear walkways and emergency exits

3. Required Skills and Attributes

3.1 Essential Skills

Physical Fitness

Capacity to lift, carry and move heavy freight regularly. Ability to perform physical work throughout shifts. Stamina for repetitive loading, unloading and handling activities.

Attention to Detail

Accuracy in sorting and checking freight. Ability to identify discrepancies and damages. Precision in documentation and labeling.

Teamwork

Ability to work cooperatively with dock crew and drivers. Coordination during team lifting and loading activities. Support for colleagues during peak periods.

Safety Awareness

Understanding of manual handling and lifting techniques. Awareness of workplace hazards. Commitment to following safety procedures and using PPE correctly.

3.2 Personal Attributes

- Strong work ethic and positive attitude
- Reliability and punctuality
- Ability to work at a fast pace during busy periods
- Basic numeracy skills for counting and checking
- Flexibility to work varied shifts including nights and weekends
- Initiative and ability to identify problems
- Willingness to learn and follow procedures
- Ability to work in a physically demanding environment
- Good communication skills for coordinating with team members

4. Qualifications and Requirements

4.1 Mandatory Requirements

- Eligibility to work in Australia (citizenship, permanent residency or valid work visa)
- Physical fitness to lift and carry items up to 20-30kg regularly
- Ability to work flexible hours including early mornings, nights and weekends
- Basic English literacy and numeracy

4.2 Desirable Qualifications

- Forklift licence (LF) - essential for most positions
- Previous warehouse or freight handling experience
- Order picker or reach truck licence (LO)
- Dangerous goods handling training
- First aid certificate
- Working at heights certification

4.3 Experience

Previous experience in freight handling, warehousing or logistics is beneficial but not essential for entry-level positions. Training in safe manual handling, equipment operation and freight procedures will be provided. The ideal candidate will demonstrate physical capability, attention to detail and commitment to safety.

5. Working Conditions

5.1 Hours of Work

- Shift work including day, afternoon and night shifts
- Early morning starts (from 4:00am-6:00am for some shifts)
- Regular work on weekends and public holidays
- Overtime during peak periods
- Roster provided in advance as per award requirements

5.2 Physical Requirements

- Regular lifting, carrying and moving of items weighing 20-30kg
- Occasional handling of heavier items (up to 50kg) using team lifting
- Extended periods of standing, walking, bending and reaching
- Repetitive manual handling throughout shifts
- Working at heights on forklifts or loading equipment
- Manual dexterity for equipment operation

5.3 Work Environment

- Indoor warehouse or freight terminal environment
- Exposure to loading dock areas (may be outdoors)
- Working in varying temperatures
- Exposure to dust, noise and diesel fumes
- Fast-paced environment with time pressures
- Interaction with truck drivers and transport operators

5.4 Safety Equipment

- Steel-capped safety boots required (may be provided)
- High-visibility vest or uniform provided
- Personal protective equipment (gloves, hard hat, ear protection) provided
- Safety glasses for certain tasks
- Company uniform must be worn

6. Award Information

6.1 Modern Award Coverage

This position is typically covered by the Storage Services and Wholesale Award 2020 (MA000084) or the Road Transport and Distribution Award 2020 (MA000038), depending on the nature of the business operations. These awards set minimum pay rates, penalty rates, allowances and conditions for employees in logistics and freight handling.

6.2 Classification Level

Freight Handlers are generally classified under the award as:

- Level 1: Entry level handler performing basic duties
- Level 2: Experienced handler with forklift or equipment skills
- Level 3: Senior handler with additional responsibilities or supervisory duties

The specific classification level will be determined based on the duties performed, equipment licences and experience of the successful candidate.

6.3 Penalty Rates and Allowances

Employees are entitled to penalty rates for work performed:

- Afternoon shift: Penalty rate applies
- Night shift: Higher penalty rate applies
- Saturday: Premium rates apply
- Sunday: Premium rates apply

- Public holidays: Premium penalty rates apply
- Overtime: Penalty rates for work beyond ordinary hours

Casual employees receive a 25% casual loading instead of paid leave entitlements. Refer to the relevant award for current rates and conditions.

7. Expected Behaviours

7.1 Professional Conduct

- Treat all colleagues, supervisors and drivers with respect and courtesy
- Follow all company policies and procedures
- Maintain confidentiality regarding business information
- Arrive on time for scheduled shifts, ready to work
- Notify supervisor of absence or lateness as soon as possible
- Maintain professional conduct at all times

7.2 Work Standards

- Handle all freight with care to prevent damage
- Maintain accuracy in sorting and documentation
- Work efficiently to meet dispatch schedules
- Maintain cleanliness and organization in work areas
- Report discrepancies or issues immediately
- Follow proper procedures for all tasks

7.3 Safety and Compliance

- Always prioritize safety over speed
- Follow proper manual handling and lifting techniques
- Wear required PPE at all times
- Report all hazards, incidents and near misses immediately
- Operate equipment only when licensed and authorized
- Participate actively in safety training and meetings

7.4 Teamwork Expectations

- Work cooperatively with dock crew and drivers
- Communicate clearly during team lifting and loading
- Support team members during busy periods
- Share equipment and resources fairly
- Accept feedback constructively and apply improvements
- Maintain a positive attitude during challenging shifts

8. Application Process

8.1 How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit:

- Current resume/CV
- Brief cover letter outlining relevant experience and availability
- Copies of forklift licence and other relevant certificates
- Contact details for two referees

8.2 Selection Process

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to:

- Initial phone or video interview
- In-person interview and workplace tour
- Physical capability assessment
- Forklift skills assessment (if applicable)
- Reference checks
- Pre-employment medical assessment may be required

8.3 Equal Opportunity

We are an equal opportunity employer and welcome applications from all qualified candidates regardless of age, gender, cultural background, disability or other characteristics protected by law.

Position Acknowledgement

I have read and understood this job description. I understand that my duties may be varied from time to time to meet the operational needs of the business.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

For Manager Use Only

Manager Name: _____

Manager Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____