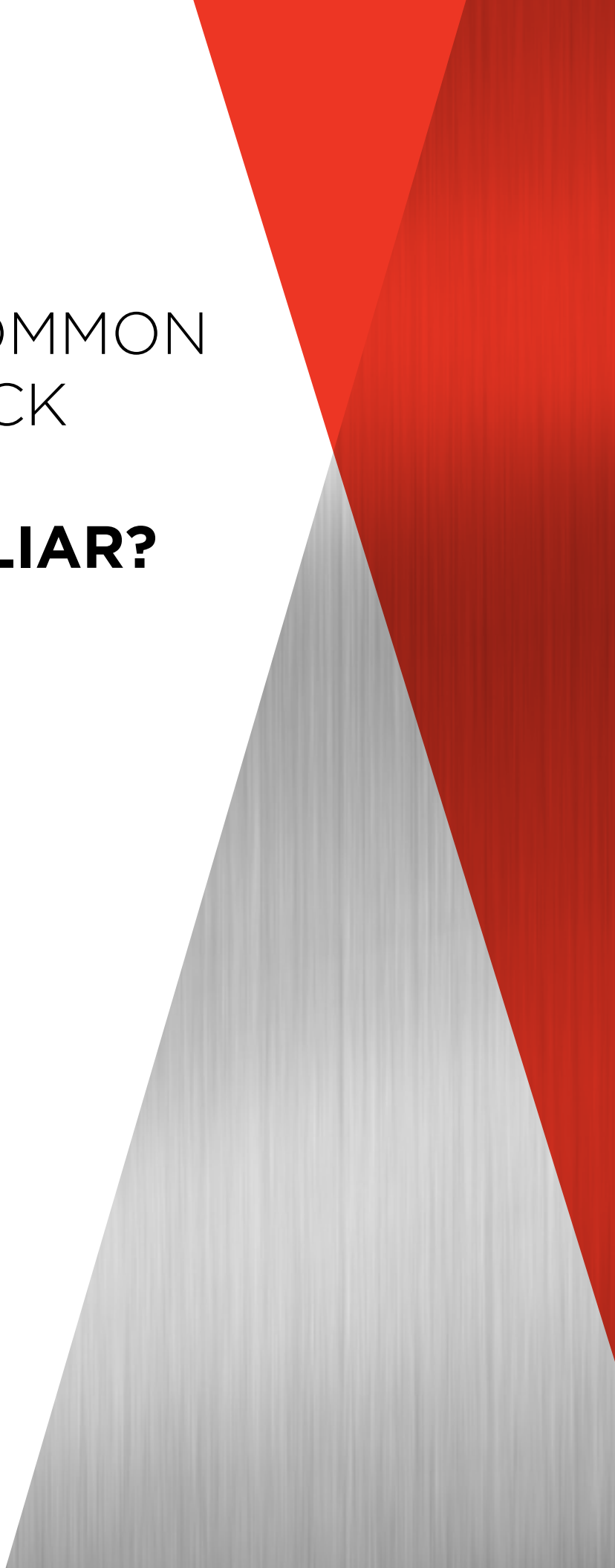
DO THESE COMMON LOADING DOCK PAIN POINTS **SOUND FAMILIAR?**



MINER

Is a loading dock the most critical asset in your facility? We think so. Without a functional dock, your organization loses its connection with upstream suppliers and those depending on delivery downstream, not to mention what it can do internally.

But functional is not the same as efficient. Even if most of your dock equipment technically works, there could still be issues that are holding you back. If one dock door won't open, for example, that puts added strain on the ones that do. If a dock leveler deploys slowly or incorrectly, that's added time that your employees have to wait in order to start work.

And don't forget, malfunctioning equipment always carries the potential for injury or damage to trucks, forklifts and other equipment. About one-quarter of all warehouse injuries occur at the loading dock. To reduce the risks at loading docks, facility managers must identify their pain points and address them promptly.

Are you struggling with any of these challenges at your facility?

Challenge #1: Wet loading dock floors

A wet floor isn't just a nuisance - it's a safety hazard. That's true about any business. But a wet floor in the loading dock is particularly dangerous, as employees and equipment work in tandem to complete tasks quickly. Excess moisture on surfaces can reduce fork truck tire traction and trip up employees moving about the space. It can also pose a risk to product integrity, particularly if the wet dock is in a food production or storage facility.

Fortunately, there are many ways to prevent moisture from making your loading dock unsafe or unsanitary. Dock seals and dock shelters are two popular products that can prevent outdoor elements from affecting your work environment. Dock seals are installed around the perimeter of the dock door, preventing wind, rain, snow, dirt and

debris from getting inside your warehouse. They are equally effective at keeping bugs and birds out. Dock shelters act in much the same way; they cover the top and sides of the truck, providing protection from water and anything else that has pooled at the tops of trailers. Because of the many types of trailers in today's supply chain, dock seals and shelters are customizable in design. However, a thorough understanding of the trailers being serviced is paramount in providing the best seal for facilities.

Preventing moisture from accumulating is only one step in keeping the loading dock dry. When condensation can't be prevented, it needs to be controlled as best as possible. High-volume, low-speed fans are excellent for this purpose. These fans with extra-long blades work to speed up the evaporation process and keep employees more comfortable in warmer months.

As beneficial as these installations are, they aren't invulnerable. Like any other asset, they need inspections and maintenance throughout their life spans, as well as replacement when they are no longer functional. When dock seals begin to fail, they serve little purpose to the facility, and dock shelters that are weathered and worn out simply can't provide the same protection that they once did.

Although time and inclement weather are normally the factors that wear down dock seals and shelters, people can too. And we're not talking only about vandals who try to gain unauthorized access to your warehouse by damaging these barriers. Truck drivers and styles of trailers might accidentally damage this equipment by backing into a loading dock crookedly. But regardless of what the root cause is, the result is the same: an unsafe, unsanitary work environment.

Challenge #2: Improper dock design leads to facility damage

A trailer coming into contact with your facility may not seem like a big problem at first, but this situation can turn into a major structural issues for facilities if not corrected early. If what caused the initial damage reoccurs, or if facility managers don't brace the affected area, it could lead to even greater destruction.

Improper dock or truck well design is usually the root cause underlying concrete damage to the outside of a loading dock. To avoid these costly mistakes, facilities ought to discuss proper dock bumper protection during the initial design phase. Dock bumpers are designed to absorb much of the impact. Improper dock design then snowballs into many different expensive issues that could have been avoided if proper design protocols were in place.

As loading docks sustain increased damage, they can affect other assets. A deteriorating dock may not seal properly, and gaps may form between the door and the floor. A dock left unprotected by bumpers is put at greater risk if a truck backs up too quickly. Should the leveler or the door be struck by the trailer, they can sustain damage that's difficult and expensive to remedy. Additionally, damaged concrete can complicate the replacement of a dock door, leveler or other type of equipment. Crevices in the exterior or the

floor may necessitate additional work, such as cutting and pouring concrete, before a facility can address a replacement or new installation. What was once a small crack has now decommissioned a dock and derailed operations, possibly for months.

To keep a loading dock in excellent shape, facilities must protect their assets and address issues as they arise. However, a strong initial design plays a large role as well. A poorly designed loading bay or a truck well with inadequately installed equipment can weaken the loading dock performance and put excess strain on the building. Protection against concrete damage is a long-term goal that begins in the design phase and must be revisited throughout a company's tenancy.

Challenge #3: Unsecured trucks during loading and unloading

Loading and unloading trucks at your dock shouldn't pose undue safety risks to your employees. But if the trailers docked at your facility aren't restrained, accidents can happen. As forklifts move in and out of the trailer bed, the jostling can cause the truck to roll forward. Trailer creep puts anyone inside the trailer or about to enter at risk of falling between an unexpected gap. Additionally, if a truck moves away from the building while the dock leveler is engaged, the vehicle could damage the equipment and the facility exterior.

Truck restraints are simple and straightforward solutions that alleviate these concerns. Restraints engage the vehicle's rear impact guard (RIG) so employees can move in and out of the trailer safely. Many modern restraints are connected to automatic light systems that signal whether it's safe to enter the trailer and when the driver can safely exit the dock. Units can be integrated into interlocking systems that ensure that vehicles are adequately secured before the dock doors are open or dock levelers are set in place. These systems won't disengage until the door is closed once again.

Challenge #4: Faulty equipment leads to workarounds

Truck drivers arriving at your facility have a singular goal, and they strive to accomplish it as quickly as possible. If dock operations don't run efficiently because employees can't use equipment the way it was meant to be used, the entire loading and unloading process slows down, causing ripple effects throughout your supply chain.

The docking process begins when the dock door opens. But if a dock door won't open properly, is hard to operate or opens too slowly, it can be difficult to work at the right pace. Faulty dock doors are also safety risks. An unreliable door may not stay open or closed when needed. Doors that open too slowly risk being struck by fork trucks, which can lead to extensive damage.

Dock levelers that aren't functional are also a safety risk. If a mechanical dock leveler isn't working, it may seem intuitive for an employee to identify the problem or manipulate the leveler to work. But this kind of troubleshooting is extremely dangerous. Dock levelers that don't seem to be operational but then suddenly deploy can take an employee by surprise and lead to a serious injury. The same goes for lips that don't extend. Employees may want to force the lip into position, but with their hands so close to moving metal parts, it's not hard to imagine that this can easily lead to a broken finger or worse.

It's not just dysfunctional mechanical dock levelers that pose problems; powered levelers that aren't operational can also lead to injuries, damages and hold-ups. When dock equipment is integrated, each component must operate for the whole system to work. Consider an interlocking system where the dock leveler only deploys once the door is open, and the door only opens once the truck restraints are secured. One broken element and nothing works; these systems are designed with this fail-safe to maintain a high level of safety.

Resolve your loading dock pain points with Miner

Almost every loading dock has the potential for problems, big or small, that need to be addressed as soon as possible: a loose dock leveler, a damaged door, a ripped seal. But that doesn't mean you should jump into action with simple fixes. Any adjustments made to a defective loading dock should support efficient and sustained operation.

Miner's specialists are knowledgeable and trained on all kinds of warehouse equipment, especially those found in a

loading dock. If you're experiencing problems at your loading dock, Miner can help you determine the root cause as well as a solution that fits your facility and budget.

Many of the pain points at the loading dock, including those discussed here, are a result of inadequate maintenance or poor initial design considerations. In addition to identifying and implementing solutions for your docking difficulties, Miner's specialists can, through planned maintenance, also prevent them from recurring. With a national network of qualified technicians, Miner can answer the challenges at your facility. To begin the conversation, request a quote today.

PARTNER WITH MINER AND IMPROVE EFFICIENCY AT YOUR FACILITY

The benefits of working with a centralized equipment and maintenance solution are plentiful, ranging from cost effectiveness to a more productive workforce to creating a modernized facility. Is your company ready to make the switch to a centralized network of equipment and maintenance professionals? Reach out to Miner to learn how we can make a difference at your company.