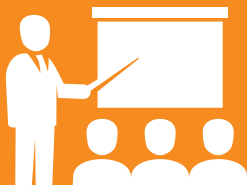


Lifting: make it right from the start

In the middle of a busy shift, it only takes a busy worker a split second to strain a muscle, sustain a hernia, sprain a ligament or damage a vertebra — all from the improper lifting of an object. The results are likely weeks or months of pain, and likely a workers' compensation claim.

Maintaining a safe working environment is every employer's responsibility, and an ongoing safety



education program not only communicates safe lifting techniques but also demonstrates the value of lifting safely—and the pain of not.



75%

of back injuries are sustained when an employee is lifting.

— Bureau of Labor Statistics

Lifting injury: an everyday risk

Lifting injuries occur frequently, particularly in manufacturing and logistics facilities. For example, work-related back injuries number approximately 1 million per year, and data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that three out of four back injuries are sustained when an employee is lifting. Nineteen percent of Randstad's workers' compensation claims are attributed to lifting objects or items, and lifting-related incidents rate as our second-most frequent workplace injury, after slips, trips and falls.



Beyond the back

While lifting accidents frequently affect the back, they can also create soft-tissue injuries to the head, neck, shoulder, knee, elbow, wrist and ankles. Additionally, improper lifting techniques can result in a contusion, laceration, crush or other injuries, and the results can be permanent damage or even fatal.

Safe lifting: Part employee, part employer

While an obvious cause of lifting-related injury is improper lifting technique on the part of the employee, employers have many opportunities to decrease the risk of lifting injuries.

- **Select the right employees to handle lifting assignments.** To ensure employees are physically prepared to take on specific lifting tasks, employers can institute strength tests and encourage physical conditioning and stretching for roles that include lifting responsibilities.
- **Assure proper lifting parameters are in place and enforced.** For safe lifting to occur, the item being lifted should meet maximum allowable weight requirements and be of a size and compactness that is appropriate for the task. The package should be stable to ensure easy lifting and, when appropriate, handles should be available. Employers can also reduce lifting injury risk by making sure the types, frequency or duration of the lifting activities are appropriate for each employee.
- **Aim for easiest lifting.** Items are easiest to lift if they are placed between knee and shoulder height, which reduces the need for employees to bend down or reach above their head. Employers can affect this safety range by assuring that pallets or shelves are at the appropriate level and that employees are able to maintain contact with the lifted item.
- **Use lifting aids when necessary.** While the initial cost may seem high, conveyors, pneumatic lifts or pallet positioners or rotators can easily offset the potential cost of workers' cost claims, lost work days or employee replacement. Employers can also provide ergonomic back braces to help prevent bending at the waist and help employees refrain from potentially injurious lifting positions.
- **Train, train and retrain employees how to lift.** Proper lifting techniques can feel awkward or require more planning than the natural tendency to reach or bend, so employees must be reminded time and again of the benefits of proper lifting. To gain employee buy in, it's been proven effective to have seasoned employees participate in the trainings; here, they can share their wisdom, experience and demonstrate why proper lifting procedures are "worth it."

Work-related back injuries number approximately 1 million per year.



Standard safe lifting measures include:

1. Keep the item you're lifting close to your body.
2. Feet should be shoulder width apart; knees bent, back straight and stomach muscles tight.
3. Lift with your legs, not your back; be sure that toes are pointed in the direction of the lift and keep your eye focus upward.
4. Turn with a straight back, don't twist or bend to change direction.

Many safety training programs address proper lifting techniques, and detailed lifting guidelines are explained in *Ergonomic Guidelines for Manual Materials Handlings*, a publication of The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Randstad. Your partner in safety.

Randstad believes firmly in the value of a safe workplace and provides lifting-specific training to all talent through an initial safety orientation. In addition, Randstad's safety team coaches and trains talent at client sites during normal "tail-gate" safety topic meetings or other training sessions regarding safe lifting.

Randstad is poised and ready to deliver skilled and safety-trained talent for a full range of positions. With the right talent on board, just think what more you could do to drive your business success.

