

SHIPPING/RECEIVING

JOB DESCRIPTION

During the SHARP site visit on March 16, 2011, two employees from shipping and receiving were observed.

During the observation period, employees spent their time preparing orders for shipping by pulling product from the shelf.

RISKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The shippers were observed bending from the waist to reach stock on the lower shelves, but this posture only occurs during a short portion of their work day. Shippers may also be on their feet for most of their shift. However, they are continually moving, which is preferable. Although shippers do not spend a great portion of their day bending from the waist to load lower levels of the pallets, lowering heavier objects to this level could pose a potential risk for back injury.

- To eliminate this risk, pallets can be placed on a scissor lift whose height can be adjusted according to the height of the packages on the pallet.
- Whatever the solution, the goal is to ensure that pallets are loaded around waist height.

Order picking involves frequently handling many packages of different weights and sizes. From our observations and discussions with the employees, the most common weight handled is between 5-10 pounds, which is within the recommended weight limits. However, heavier packages weighing more than 34 lbs may present a risk because of the high frequency at which this weight is handled when filling an order. Team lifting is already utilized when lifting heavier larger packages which is a good workplace practice. Suggestions to further reduce the risk include:

- Placing heavier packages on shelves between standing knuckle and waist height,
- Placing pallets closer to shelves to reduce the distance of each carry,
- Using a cart to move larger packages, and
- Sliding larger packages between work surfaces (shelf-to-cart, cart-to-pallet).

SHIPPING/RECEIVING (CONT.)

The weights and sizes of packages lifted in this department vary greatly. However, large packages pose a potential risk for injury. These weights exceed the recommended limits of two assessment methods. Although handling heavier weights (the greatest weight described was 65 lbs) does not occur throughout the entire shift, they are handled for short periods of time which still presents an injury risk due to the combination of weight and the postures that the workers assumed during lifting (some of those heavier parts are stored higher than recommended).

- Reducing the frequency at which heavier weights need to be moved would reduce the risk of injury.
- Consider the location of storing heavy parts based on their frequency of use in order to reduce the distances that the parts have to be carried.

The visual demands of this job are quite high since workers must accurately match product numbers on the shipping statement to those on the packages. Lighting between shelves may be inadequate for this task, especially when reading package labels on shelves higher than the height of the worker.

- Using a scanner to read and display product numbers on labels would decrease the current visual demands and reduce errors from misreading labels.
- Placing labels at lower heights might also help avoid reading errors without assuming additional operating costs.

The physical demands of this job are high, especially when handling larger/heavier packages or working to pull orders in a timely fashion. As a result of last minute orders or unexpected changes in shipping dates, employees reported having difficulty keeping up with the work demands of time constraints and deadlines.

- For situations when added shipments are unexpected or deadlines are shortened, additional staff should be utilized to ensure that all orders can be completed without increasing the demands of the shippers.