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STORE, PICK, TRANSPORT: A day in the Life of Warehousing  
September PROwebinar: Back to Basics: Identifying and  
Evaluating Ergonomic Hazards  
Upcoming Events

## PROservices

- Physical Demands Analyses
- Cognitive Demands Analyses
- Ergonomic Risk Assessments
- Office Ergonomic Assessments
- Return to Work Job Matching
- Injury Compatibility Assessments
- Manual Handling Assessments
- Fatigue Analyses
- Postural Studies
- Workstation Design
- Engineering Audits
- Job Hazard Analysis
- Safety Audits
- Customized Training
- Health & Safety and Ergonomic Program Development

## STORE, PICK, TRANSPORT: A day in the life of Warehousing

Having been in hundreds of warehouses, it doesn't take long to realize that there are definitive trends in this industry. With often limited space and masses of materials that need to be handled, transported, picked and stored, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) almost seem accepted amongst management. This strikes an odd cord since profit margins in the warehousing industry are notoriously low; a significant lost time claim could drastically influence a company's fiscal profits.

To add insult to injury (no pun intended), potential injuries include back, shoulder, elbow, neck, hip and knee problems. According to recent WSIB statistics, **close to 50% of all injuries are MSDs and the warehousing industry has almost a 2% higher injury rate than that of private industry** – the motivation to implement an ergonomics program is in the numbers! If injury statistics aren't enough, also consider the dollars lost due to lost productivity and quality.

A common, and frustrating, saying in the warehousing industry is *"We've always done it this way"*. Unfortunately, this saying won't help to reduce injuries, nor will it help impact the company's bottom line. Consider this quote from Lessons from Europe for American Business: "It is not the most intellectual that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself." (Megginson, 1963). A well-designed ergonomics program will incorporate change and innovation as a method to improve workstations, work processes and overall human comfort. The most successful warehousing companies have reported using a multitude of ergonomic tools and aids to help identify, brainstorm, implement and control MSD related hazards such as force, repetition and awkward postures.

### So what are these companies doing when it comes to ergonomics?

- ▶ Providing a continuous focus on work method strategies, training and awareness to ergonomic hazards
- ▶ Completing Physical Demands Assessments for all jobs to ensure that claims and return to work cases are managed with the least impact to productivity and costs

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## MISSION STATEMENT

"To consistently provide our clients with professional, proactive and productive solutions to advance ergonomic strategies within an organization to reduce injury risk and improve workplace design"

- ▶ Strategizing using the 80/20 Rule to position: 20% of the most vital materials placed at optimal levels so that employees' efficiency can be maximized and productivity increased (Industry Week, 2013)
- ▶ Job Safety Analyses to act as job specific framework of all hazards and prioritization strategies
- ▶ Implementing controls such as conveyors, hydraulics, rotating/height adjustable pallet tables, cantilever racking, low vibration fork and tow motors, etc.
- ▶ Steering committees to address and research high risk/cost issues such as vibration or racking
- ▶ Reviews to optimize processes and warehouse layout to minimize product handling and improve the manual handling conditions for the employees
- ▶ Implementing pre-employment screening protocols and employee feedback systems

### And has it been worth it? Here are some of their success stories:

- ★ International Truck and Engine Corp. reduced its injury frequency rate by approximately 70% and its lost time rate by 60%
- ★ Ace Hardware reduced injuries and increased productivity rates as processes went from taking several hours to only about 20 minutes
- ★ Aurora Packing's lost workday rate was reduced to approximately one-third of the average for its industry (EHS Today, 2001)

With increased competition in the warehousing sector it stands to reason that any edge in decreasing employee turnover, improving productivity and increasing revenue will be welcomed into corporate strategy. A robust ergonomics program will have its roots in innovation, strategic planning, and continuous improvement and as an end result has the potential to achieve all of those company goals.



## PROevents

### WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT:

- Barrie & District Chapter HSPA Conference – October 1-2<sup>nd</sup>
- Schedule 2 Employer's Group Conference – October 7-8<sup>th</sup>
- PIP Regional Conference (York Region) – November 13<sup>th</sup>
- PIP Regional Conference (Golden Horseshoe) – November 20<sup>th</sup>

## PROwebinars

### SEPTEMBER

**Back to Basics:  
Identifying &  
Evaluating  
Ergonomic Hazards**  
Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> @ 9:30 a.m.

