



Industry: **Trucking**  
Occupation: **Forklift driver**  
Task: **Manual loading**



## What happened:

### Worker 1

For the past 15 years, it has been a regular part of this 34-year-old forklift driver's job to sort and lift lumber by hand to build loads. One day, as he was lifting a large board, he felt pain in his lower back. That pain turned out to be a ruptured disk. Repeatedly lifting heavy and awkward loads had finally taken its toll on his back. The injury kept him off work for 49 days and the workers' compensation claim cost over \$14,000.

### Worker 2

A 22-year-old forklift driver was lifting 80-100 pound tires onto the trailer. Because they were so heavy and not palletized, he was using momentum to swing the tires back and forth and then heave them on the stack. An hour of this heavy lifting strained his back causing him to be off work for two weeks.

## Take one for the team?

Not if the whole team can be safe by working together! TIRES repeatedly sees incidents where workers are injured because they are required to lift items individually that should be lifted by a team, or better yet, with a forklift.

Sadly, there are often other workers nearby who could have helped to lift the heavy load and prevent the injury. Something in the safety culture of the company or work group keeps workers from asking for help.

### Employers

- Plan loading and unloading activities to minimize manual handling.
- Provide equipment that is adequate for the loading and unloading tasks that employees are expected to perform.
- If lifting must be done manually, train workers to get help for heavy or awkward loads. Even if it takes longer, it is worth it if everyone can go home pain free at the end of the day.

### Workers

- **Even though you CAN lift that heavy load, consider if you SHOULD lift it.** Work as teams or use machinery to lift whenever possible.

[www.KeepTruckingSafe.org](http://www.KeepTruckingSafe.org)

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