

# Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis

## TIRESPIN

Volume 1, Issue 1

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### Welcome to TireSpin!

This is the first edition of a quarterly newsletter from the Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis (TIRES) project. TireSpin will share information that will help reduce the frequency and severity of worker injuries in the trucking industry.

**Please Visit our Website:**  
<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Trucking/>

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The SHARP Program is a research group within the Insurance Services division of WA Labor & Industries.



### What is TIRES and what can it do for you?

The Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis (TIRES) project team is working with Washington State's trucking industry to identify causes for the most frequent injuries and to develop effective strategies for preventing them.

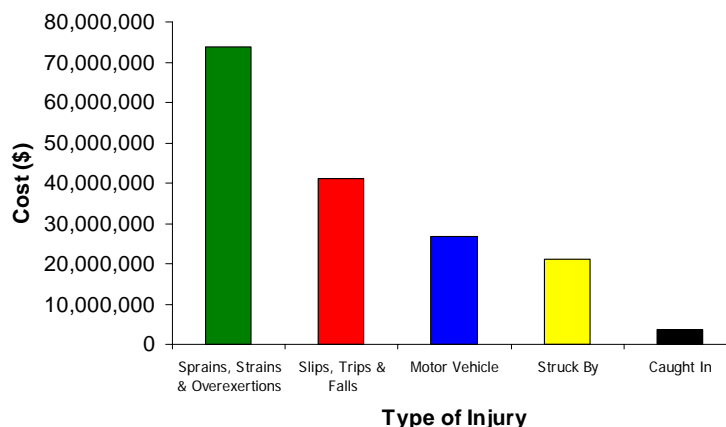
The goal of the TIRES project is to help Washington trucking companies reduce:

- 1) Sprains, strains and over exertions.
- 2) Slips, trips and falls.
- 3) Struck-by/against and.
- 4) Vehicle crash injuries.

These conditions make up almost 90% of the industry's workers' compensation claims, costs and lost

workdays. Transportation ranks as one of the highest risk sectors for work-related injuries. Truck drivers have a higher proportion of injuries than most other occupations.

These facts have led industry and government leaders at the state and national level to recognize this as an issue in need of resources to help trucking companies remain competitive.



Trucking has some of the highest workers' compensation costs for sprains/strains and slip/trips/falls. This data are for the trucking industry, years 2000-2004.

## What has TIRES been doing so far?

Although SHARP has been learning about the trucking industry by visiting with trucking companies over the past two years, the TIRES project officially began this year with the addition of a safety engineer, Scott Edwards, who is now working with trucking companies to identify injury hazards and feasible controls. TIRES received federal funding this summer, in addition to money committed to the project by L&I.



Material handling was cited by companies as one of the biggest causes of overexertion

SHARP is working on identifying hazards and practical solutions through a variety of methods these include:

- Ride-alongs with drivers.
- Onsite observation and assessment.
- Follow-up interviews with injured workers.
- Employer and employee surveys.
- Analysis of workers' compensation data.

All of these activities including the development of solutions are being reviewed by our steering committee which includes representatives from industry, labor and independent owner/operators.

## Employer and driver surveys

A survey of Washington trucking companies was conducted last year to identify what employers see as their biggest challenges and needs to reduce injuries. The two biggest issues identified by employers were:

- 1) Sprains, strains and over exertions,  
and
- 2) Slips, trips and falls.

These two types of injuries account for about two-thirds of workers' compensation costs. Read the 2005 Employer Survey Results on Reducing Injuries in the Trucking Industry at:

<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Files/Trucking/Tires2005Survey.pdf> (122 KB PDF).

Right now a survey of over 2000 truck drivers is being conducted to get the worker perspective. Both the employer and driver surveys are confidential and SHARP does not receive any information that identifies an individual or company.

The information from these surveys will help us better target resources towards what people in the industry feel are important.

## What's next for TIRES?

We are currently conducting ride-alongs with drivers in the less-than-load sector, observing their working conditions and identifying areas where practical solutions can be implemented. We will be conducting ride-alongs and other observational assessments in more sectors in the near future. Using information gathered from these visits along with input from our stakeholders we plan to develop solutions that will be pilot tested at various worksites and then shared throughout the industry.

“Most all these injuries are preventable.”

- Employer survey respondent

# Preventing injuries: manual material handling

Cargo movement is a daily concern and source of potential problems for trucking companies. Employers in last year's survey identified manual material handling as the most frequent risk, or source, of sprain and strain injuries. Work methods were identified as the most frequent reason for slip, trip, and fall injuries. You can reduce manual material handling and risky work methods by educating your drivers on ways to identify potential injury sources.



Photo 1: The top tier pallet is positioned so that the receiving customer's forklift driver can lift it off.

One solution used by the industry for reducing injuries is providing good communication between your drivers and the warehouse staff loading the truck/trailer. The driver knows what dock conditions his regular customers have and what material handling equipment is available. By having the driver convey this information to the warehouse crew, it allows for efficient load placement. When communication lapses or doesn't take place, the driver can find himself in a predicament.



Photo 2: This time, the driver has to turn a pallet weighing approximately 250 lbs.

The driver in the first photo appears to have a well-placed load. In the second photo, the top pallet was not positioned for easy access and the driver had to manually turn the pallet so the customer could lift it off. This happened because the lower pallet load size required them to be pushed into the trailer with the top pallet already stacked on it. Several potential injury risks exist because of this:

- Risk of strain/sprain or over exertion.
- Loss of footing while pushing.
- Potential hand pinch point between pallet corner and trailer wall.

If the forklift driver at the loading warehouse had consistently placed the loads, the driver might not have been exposed to these risks.

## How to prevent these situations

Provide for driver and warehouse communication as part of your loading process. Have warehouse staff ride along with a driver so they better understand the issues. Educate the driver to better identify risk factors such as pinch points, footing and strain/sprain possibilities.

SHARP will be working on this and other issues over the next several years. We will investigate interventions, distribute information and develop material based on input from the industry. If you would like to take part, contact us through the TIRES website, by email at: [edww235@LNI.wa.gov](mailto:edww235@LNI.wa.gov) or by phone at 1-888-667-4277

Injury prevention ideas from survey respondents:

“Resurface walk boards when necessary.”

“Frequent reviews on load procedures (normally done at daily dispatch).”

## **TIRES: Getting traction on worker safety**

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### **Make sure you receive TireSpin**

To be added to the mailing list for TireSpin, You can contact us through the TIRES website, by email at [edww235@LNI.wa.gov](mailto:edww235@LNI.wa.gov) or by phone at **1-888-667-4277**. Please specify whether you would like to receive the newsletter by US mail or by email.

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## **Available resources**

The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries has safety and health resources for you to use:

- Video Library, Workshops and Online Safety Courses  
<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/TrainTools/>
- Publications  
<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/FormPub/default.asp#/formpub/FormsPubsBySub.asp>
- Rule-Specific Tools  
<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Rules/HelpTools/>

Other Trucking safety resources available on the web include:

- British Health and Safety Executive  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/haulage/index.htm>