

Grocery Wholesalers - Lifting Injuries

Over 500 wholesale grocery warehouse workers sustained serious musculoskeletal injuries while lifting objects in the years 2000–2004



Serious injuries from lifting are costly and affect your industrial insurance premiums. They contribute to the reason for the average base rate of \$1.09 per hour per employee paid by grocery wholesale employers in 2006. If your company has a higher than average number of injuries (claims), your “experience rating” could increase by as much as 25% in one year to \$1.35 per hour per employee.

Stated in another way, if you had 25 full-time grocery warehouse employees and had an average number of injuries (claims), you would pay about \$54,500 in premiums in 2006, or \$2,200 per employee. If your experience rating increased by 25% because you had higher than average injuries, you would pay about \$13,000 more or \$67,500 in premiums in 2006.

Grocery Warehouse Order Picker

Causes of lifting injuries

Lifting injuries account for 23% of all serious injuries in grocery warehouses. Over half of these lifting injuries occurred when workers were lifting boxes. Other frequent objects lifted were pallets, sacks, bags and miscellaneous containers. The back was most frequently injured, followed by the shoulder and abdomen.



Lifting while reaching is hard on the back!!

Ways to prevent lifting injuries

- Train employees on proper lifting techniques.
- Use a palletizer to keep pallets at waist height.
- Have employees do team lifting for items heavier than 50 pounds.
- Raise lower shelves on racks.
- Use a vacuum hoist on the forklift to lift boxes.
- Use moveable stairs to get items stored above the shoulders.

For more information view the OSHA E-Tool on grocery warehousing at <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/grocerywarehousing/index.html>