



# Restaurant Industry- Overexertion

During 2000–2004, over 1500 restaurant workers experienced overexertion injuries that directly led to over 252,000 lost workdays.



These injuries were so serious that employees had to take time off work to recover, or were permanently disabled. Serious overexertion injuries are costly and affect your industrial insurance premiums. They contribute to the reason for the average base rate of \$0.36 per hour per employee paid by restaurant 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 \$0.43 per hour per employee.

Stated in another way, if you had 10 full-time restaurant employees and had an average number of injuries (claims), you would pay about \$7100 in premiums in 2006. If your experience rating increased by 25% because you had higher than average injuries, you would pay about \$1500 more or \$8600 in premiums in 2006.

## Causes of overexertion injuries

Over 31% of all serious injuries among restaurant workers were due to overexertion from excessive physical effort resulting in muscle or joint injuries. More than half of the overexertion injuries were from manual handling of items such as:

- Boxes/carts
- Trays/racks
- Pots and pans
- China
- Containers
- Sacks/bags
- Garbage cans
- Barrels/kegs



Solution Examples

## Ways to prevent overexertion injuries

### Kitchen staff:

Arrange storage so that the heaviest and frequently used items are stored between knuckle and shoulder height to reduce awkward lifting and overreaching.

Use smaller garbage containers to limit the weight of the load employees must lift and dump. Use side access frames so bags do not have to be lifted over the container rim.

### Food service staff:

Reduce travel with trays or stacks of dishes by using carts (includes bussing tables).

Carry fewer plates at a time.

Carry plates, coffee pots, and water jugs close to the body.

When pouring, bring the glass or cup close, rather than overreaching with a full jug.

