

Trucking
Injury
Reduction
Emphasis

TIRESPIN

Volume 1, Issue 2

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Welcome to TIRESPIN!

This is the second 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:
www.LNI.wa.gov/safety/research/trucking

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“Don’t Fall for It” A TIRES injury prevention campaign

What is the problem?

Around one in five workplace injuries in the trucking sector in Washington State are related to slipping, tripping or falling.

But aren’t these kinds of injuries just part of doing business?

Don’t fall for that line of thinking. These injuries can be prevented if everyone takes responsibility. Based upon survey responses, focus group meetings and other key interviews conducted by TIRES project members we found that many drivers and company managers feel that they do not have control over these types of injuries. These beliefs are what prompted the TIRES project to devote the next six months to developing material that will detail risk factors and provide solutions for preventing slips, trips and falls.

What is TIRES doing about it?

Between December 2006 and July 1, 2007 TIRES will be

focusing on preventing injuries resulting from slips, trips and falls in the trucking industry. We have already started by creating a series of educational pieces; each month we will provide information for safety & health professionals and managers to share with employees. These documents can be copied and distributed as often as needed and are available on our website: www.LNI.wa.gov/safety/research/trucking. In addition to the monthly education material the TIRES project will work with companies across the state on pilot projects, and other educational materials.



**About 40% of drivers
“regularly feel
pressured to work
faster and for longer
hours.”**

**“Hours of service don’t
allow for a nap...if
you’re tired, you must
try to drive all 11 hours
to make any money.”**

-Survey respondent

Driver Survey Results At a Glance

In the summer of 2006 we conducted a survey of Washington State truck drivers who had a commercial driver’s license (CDL) and were employed in the trucking industry. The results of this study revealed several important findings:

- Drivers spend the majority of their work time driving a truck. However, many of them also spend more than 25% of their time handling material/cargo. And these drivers are 2 times more likely to report pain in their lower extremities due to work.
- Drivers who work more than 40 hours per week are 2 times more likely to experience pain in their neck and upper extremities (shoulder, elbows, and hands) as a result of their work.
- Of the drivers who had a work-related injury in the previous year, 43% did not file a workers’ compensation claim.
- Drivers working for a company with a positive safety climate tend to report less exposure to hazards on the job, less back and neck pain as a result of their job duties, and less pressure to work faster and for longer hours.
- Back, shoulder, & arm/hand overexertions (from having to lift heavy objects) and slips, trips, & falls (from exposure to slippery ramps and docks) are among the biggest causes of driver injuries.

Table 1. The Amount of Time Drivers Reported Spending Doing Different Activities on the Job (Out of 397 Responses)

| | < 25% of work time | > 25% of work time |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Driving | 50 | 342 |
| Sitting/Standing | 308 | 49 |
| Handling Material/Cargo | 243 | 132 |
| Standing/Walking | 270 | 94 |

Visit the TIRES web page (<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Trucking/>) on the SHARP website to read the entire results summary and see recommendations for how to address these and other related issues.

Preventing Driver Slips, Trips and Falls

For Washington state truck drivers, slip, trip and fall incidents are a significant factor for driver injuries, causing approximately 10% of injuries in the trucking industry. Slips, trips and falls are a frequent and expensive type of driver incident. Three distinct functions make up a driver's job activities, each of which presents unique exposures for slip and fall incidents. They are:

1. Operating the vehicle (including entry and exit of the cab or trailer)
2. Handling freight
3. Routine walking and climbing around the freight terminal, truck stop/fueling station or customer's place of business.

This article focuses on the first issue, vehicle operation. Future issues of TIRESPIN will address the other two activities. Drivers need to recognize the serious potential for injury represented by seemingly minor conditions such as wet surfaces, oil or grease around the fifth wheel deck area or on the trailer.

Operating the Vehicle: Entering and Exiting

Entering and exiting vehicles and trailers present a significant slip, trip or fall hazard. Over 50% of all driver injuries result from a driver getting into, out of, on, or off, their vehicle/trailer. These incidents result when a driver:

- Jumps out of a tractor cab or off a trailer (van or flatbed)
- Loses their balance when climbing into or out of the cab or trailer
- Slips as they transfer body weight when entering and exiting the vehicle

Each problem is address by the following:

Always climb out of the cab in the same manner you entered; that is facing the cab. Never jump – this stresses the back, hip, knee and ankle joints.

Use the three-point rule (i.e. keep three points in contact with the vehicle, either one hand and two feet, or two hands and one foot). This provides a firm platform and minimizes the likelihood of falling.

Avoid distractions. Stay focused on the task of entering or exiting the vehicle.

As you transfer your weight form the ground to the vehicle, or vice versa, consider that the surface may be slippery due to snow, ice, wet, mud, or oil, and may be rough, uneven or rocky. Look at the surface to determine its condition to avoid slipping, twisting or falling.

Hold on to the door or steering wheel to help you maintain your balance as you transfer your weight from standing to sitting as you enter or exit the cab.



As shown here, the lower step is virtually under the top step. If the driver exits face forward there is minimal room for a foot to rest on the lower step and the foot is likely to slide off.



Cab floor to upper step = 13.5 inches
 Upper step to lower step = 19.5 inches
 Lower step to ground = 14.75 inches
 Jump from upper step to ground = 34.25 inches

TIRES – Getting traction on worker safety

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Available Resources

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

Research

<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Trucking/Default.asp>

Video Library, Workshops, and Online Safety Courses

<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/TrainTools>

Publications

<http://www.LNI.wa.gov/FormPublications/PubsBySub.asp#wisha>

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>