

Back Care for Truck Drivers

Truck drivers experience a high frequency of back problems. A study of truck drivers and dock workers conducted by The Trucking Research Institute (an affiliate of the American Trucking Associations) developed these statistics for the U.S. trucking industry:

- 40% of driver injuries were incurred while handling freight
- 25% of all workers' compensation claims by drivers were back injuries
- 21% of injuries happened as a result of lifting; 6% due to mounting or dismounting vehicles; 4% during coupling or uncoupling; and 2% while handling dock plates
- Back sprains or strains were 14% more expensive than the average cost of all other types of injuries
- Workers under age 25 were more likely to be injured than older workers.
- Employees with less than one year on the job had twice the accident frequency of longer-tenured employees
- Injuries occurring during line deliveries were 68% more expensive than those occurring at other work places.

What Can Employers Do To Help?

As an employer, you can take many steps to minimize the likelihood of your employees' receiving back injuries. First, when an employee is hired, it is very important to determine if he or she has any medical or physical limitations which should be addressed in the workplace. Proper placement of workers is essential to limit the hazards presented by the job. Naturally, one should minimize the amount of lifting required of employees, especially of heavy or awkward objects. Employers can provide specialized tools with training on how to use them effectively. Employees should learn – and use—the proper ways to move and/or lift freight, enter and exit vehicles, and work around vehicles (e.g., pre-trip inspections, coupling and uncoupling, etc.). Supervisors should monitor employees and facilities routinely to identify and correct unsafe practices or work conditions.

The Hartford's Resources Can Help

The Hartford has several training tools available to provide information which can assist in minimizing back injuries to your driving employees. The Hartford's *Back Injury Prevention* video addresses many of the common problems every worker faces, and offers suggestions for what people can do to protect their backs. Our "*Back Tips*" brochure provides refresher awareness training for drivers. This 30-page, pocket-sized brochure addresses truck driver warm-up exercises, coupling and dock plate procedures, vehicle

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inspections, entering and exiting trucks, physical fitness, lifting and moving freight, and other related topics. Contact your Loss Control Consultant at your Hartford office for more information.

For more information, contact your local Hartford agent or your Hartford Loss Control Consultant. Visit The Hartford's Loss Control web site at <http://www.thehartford.com/corporate/losscontrol/>

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