



## Minimizing Material Handling Injuries in Your Repair Shop

Relying on our risk management expertise and our extensive information database, Utica National analyzed workers compensation losses reported by our auto service and repair shop customers during a three-year period. During this period, lifting, pushing and/or pulling (i.e. material handling) injuries were a frequent cause of employee injuries.

Here are some tips that could help lessen the instances of workplace material handling injuries:

- **Emphasize the need to handle materials safely** to reduce the threat of injury.
- **Talk with your staff about the common causes of material handling injuries** and provide the appropriate training to help everyone work safely. Material handling (lifting, pulling and/or pushing) training should include:
  - How to properly handle tires and place on vehicle axle.
  - Use of available mechanical aids and/or the buddy system for heavy lifts, i.e. transmissions, car seats, and car doors.
  - Use of hoisting apparatus in lieu of manual handling.
  - Lifting only from the knee through shoulder height.
  - General safe lifting procedures.
- **Observe your staff while they perform their daily tasks** to evaluate work practices such as lifting materials, moving parts, dismantling items, etc. Change or eliminate tasks that could cause injuries.
- **Establish work rules**, such as safe lifting practices, to reinforce the need for everyone to work safely. An example would be not allowing solo handling of awkward and/or heavy items.

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- **Identify hazardous workplace conditions** that could contribute to back or other muscular/ skeletal injuries and make changes before the accident happens. Consider such things as:
  - Heavy items stored directly on the floor rather than at knee height.
  - Cluttered and tight work spaces making lifting more hazardous.
  - Slippery floors which are dangerous when performing manual handling.
  - Safety latches and other devices should be used to prevent slippage of materials off of hoisting hooks.
- **Develop a checklist of those conditions that need ongoing attention** and use the list to make regular workplace checks to assure hazards are abated.
- **Provide equipment to help employees move or lift items.** This measure will help improve safety and efficiency!
- **If an injury occurs, take the time to find out the cause(s)** and make the necessary changes to prevent a recurrence. Consider workplace conditions and practices as well as employee experience, training and proper supervision.
- **Ask employees for input for making their job safer.**

Utica National has a wide array of materials available to help you control these types of losses. Visit us at [www.uticanational.com](http://www.uticanational.com) or contact your local Risk Management Representative for more information.

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