

ORDER PICKING



Order picking can result in a variety of muscle and joint injuries and pains from repeatedly or forcefully reaching for and lifting product, using scanners, applying stickers, standing in one position or working overtime. Other injuries and even death can result from falls and collisions with powered equipment or other workers. In addition, order pickers may be exposed to hazardous chemicals.

Hazard: Product in Bins and Shelves by Hand

Details

Picking product by hand can expose you to stressful postures and forceful actions. These can be harmful if you must reach above your shoulders or far away from your body, bend at the waist or twist to remove product from high and low bins and shelves, or lift heavy product. You could also fall when picking product from high locations.

Threat

- Back pain
- Muscle strain in your neck, back, and shoulders
- Serious injury from falling

Safe Work Guidelines

While You Are Picking High Product

- Consider using stock-picking carts with ladders attached to avoid lifting objects from above the head
- When you are 3m (10ft.) or more above the floor, use fall protection
- Follow your workplace's ladder safety policies
- To put small, light items close to the edge, use pick sticks or hooks
- To reach high product, use only stock-picking carts or platforms or cages that comply with the regulations – do not climb the racks or use the forks of a lift truck as a platform

See Industrial Establishments Regulations 851 (s.52) and Ministry of Labour (MOL) information on Ladders at http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/ladder_sliding.php

While You Are Picking Low Product

- Make sure that heavy product is raised off the floor to a good picking height (use racking or skids)
- Put pallets on rotating turntables or use skids with wheels
- To reduce reaching, move lower pallets as far forward in the floor slots as possible without blocking the aisle
- Ensure there is space between pallets so that workers can step beside the pallet to minimize reaching to the back, and to avoid stepping on the pallet

At All Times

- Make sure that you are trained in how to lift properly (e.g., bend using the hips and avoid flexing the spine) and that you have annual reviews of techniques
- If possible, use mechanical devices to lift heavy items
- To avoid reaching to the back of pallets, have a forklift turn pallets when half the product has been removed
- Consider labeling heavy items or printing carton weight on the product label
- **Do not** try to save time by picking too many items at once

Note: A workplace ergonomics committee can review the racking system, picking procedures, and employee understanding of the system.

Hazard: Picking Product Using Powered Order-picking Lift Trucks

Details

Improper use of order pickers can result in falls, falling product, and collisions with people and racking. Any part of an operator's body that is outside the platform may be hit by falling objects.

Threat

- Serious and fatal injury from falls and falling product

Safe Work Guidelines

Before You Operate the Order Picker

- Make sure that you are fully competent before you operate the picker unsupervised
- Make sure that you have been trained to recognize the early signs of mechanical breakdown that must be reported and that you

check routinely for these signs

- If you are likely to reverse your picker near people, make sure that the truck has warning lights and alarms that pedestrians can hear
- Review potential hazards in your work area

While You Are Operating the Picker

- Before you raise the platform, make sure that the floor is level and free of damage, slippery surfaces, or blockages in aisles
- Before you raise the platform, note clearances such as pipes, lights, and sprinklers – do not operate where the platform or operator is near electrical power lines or lights
- Before you move a picker or platform, warn co-workers and check for other traffic – pay particular attention if you are entering or crossing an aisle
- Make sure that you are tied off with safety harnesses and lanyards provided by the manufacturer
- Do not overload the platform
- Do not overreach or lean out of the platform
- Do not allow items to hang over the outside of the platform
- Use a platform that meets or exceeds the minimum legal requirements

See Industrial Establishments Regulation 851 (s.52)

Hazard: Lifting Heavy Loads by Hand

Details

Picking orders may involve lifting heavy or bulky loads that can put stress on your back and shoulders. Loads may also fall on your feet and toes or pinch your fingers when they are being put down.

Threat

- Muscle strain in your back and shoulders
- Injury to your fingers and toes

Safe Work Guidelines

Before You Lift

- To protect your hands and feet, wear CSA-approved safety shoes and gloves
- Warm up muscles before lifting; stretch muscles if you've been sitting or bending for a long time
- Reduce lifting by hand as much as possible – use mechanical aids such as scissor lifts and lifting devices
- Consider labeling heavy items or printing carton weight on the product label
- Get help to lift heavy or bulky items

Note: Your employer should work with vendors to reduce the size of the packs

While You Are Lifting

- Get a firm grip on the load and keep it close to your body
- Face the direction you will be moving in so that you do not have to turn during your lift
- **Do not** twist your body while you are lifting
- To avoid reaching while you are lifting, pick the cases from the front of the pallet and then have a forklift turn the pallet to unload the remainder
- When you have to put your load on a flat surface, make sure that there are blocks or shims so that your fingers will not be pinched

Hazard: Congested Aisles

Details

- Congestion is created when product is left in aisles or when there are several pickers working

in the same aisle. This congestion can lead to collisions, slips, trips, and falls.

Threat

- Serious injury
- Injury to your legs and feet

Safe Work Guidelines

- If you can, remove product stored in aisles to an appropriate storage area
- Let your supervisor know about the congestion in the aisles
- Suggest that your supervisor stagger the work schedule of order pickers where possible
- Let your co-workers know if you are passing (sound your horn, call out)
- **Do not** pass a load over another worker

Hazard: Inadequate Traffic Management

Details

The presence of pedestrians in areas where powered equipment is being used can lead to collisions.

Threat

- Serious injury

Safe Work Guidelines

- When you are backing up and approaching blind corners, use your horn or beeper
- Follow the traffic management rules established by your employer
- Your employer should:
 - Provide warning devices such as mirrors, signs, beepers, and flashing lights at aisle intersections, blind corners, doors, and

other locations where pedestrians may meet moving vehicles

- Try to separate vehicles from people and from other vehicles with clearly marked, well-planned traffic routes
- Keep pedestrians away, as far as possible, from areas that have powered vehicles
- Provide pedestrian safety training to employees who must enter the area with vehicles
- Provide high visibility vests to pedestrians entering high traffic areas

Hazard: Uncontrolled Equipment

Details

If powered equipment is not completely stopped while you are picking, the equipment could run into you, a co-worker, or racking.

Threat

- Injury to your feet, toes, and lower body

Safe Work Guidelines

- While you are picking product, completely stop your vehicle
- Wear safety shoes to protect your feet in case something does roll over them
- If any racking is damaged by moving equipment, report the damage immediately to your supervisor

Hazard: Using Scanners

Details

Repeated scanning puts stress on your wrist and elbow.

Threat

- Wrist and elbow injury

Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that you are trained in proper scanning techniques
- Follow the scanning procedures established by your employer
- If they are available, use scanners that you can wear around your waist

Hazard: Standing for Long Periods of Time

Details

When you stand for long periods of time, your leg muscles continually support your body, which can cause extreme tiredness.

Threat

- Tendon and muscle strain
- Low back pain

Safe Work Guidelines

- Make sure that you are wearing the right footwear for your job – check the soles for uneven wearing and have your gait assessed by a health professional, if necessary
- Wear padded shoe inserts that support your feet
- Take mini-breaks sitting down to relieve stress on your leg muscles or rotate through tasks that use different muscle groups during a shift

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Revised: March 2011