

The Importance of Training

Typically more than over 5000 people a year are seriously injured in the UK materials handling and warehouse environment and three people per month are actually killed.

With the increasing frequency and scale of litigation payments, it can cost an organisation up to £750k in the event of a serious accident for putting an untrained employee on a forklift truck or into a risky manual handling task.

There are however deep-seated misconceptions about the causes of these industrial accidents. It is commonly considered that the responsibility for such injuries lies mainly at the door of mechanised aids like forklift and other warehouse trucks. However, roughly half of these injuries are muscular-skeletal (affecting the back) and are caused largely by manual handling tasks.

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE), responsible in the UK for such matters, calculates that there is room for significant reduction in these figures if better employee training were more readily available.

Furthermore, statistics show the implementation of appropriate training programmes and developing a culture of high safety awareness not only significantly reduces injuries, absence from work through illness and interruption of production, but actually increases employee productivity. (Absence from work costs the British economy £12 billion plus each year.)

It should be obvious that a well-trained employee is an asset - and an ill-trained one a liability, but all too often training is seen as an unnecessary expense rather than an essential investment, and therefore frequently becomes the first area to be cut at the earliest sign of budget pressure.

If one considers the potential cost of badly or untrained employees and the potential cost-benefit of well-trained employees, the development of an appropriate training programme and the selection of training provider, if necessary, become paramount. Inevitably the success of this begins with management who understand the wider benefits of a tailored training scheme. And whilst it is by no means essential for the head of the team to have actually used the equipment

or experiences the production process, he/she must be aware of the risks involved in each task and the relevant legislation. He/she must also know when and how to secure the specialist services of an outside training provider if necessary.

Increasingly the law requires physical evidence of training provision and satisfactory completion. Such records may be maintained either by the employer or the training provider but must be maintained and readily available for inspection.

Duty of Care

The law requires that all operators of mechanised handling equipment must be trained to an appropriate level and subject to refresher training every 3 years.

Employers can expect little sympathy when accidents and injuries occur through failure to exercise a duty of care – which is what the lack of appropriate training is considered.

However responsibility for achieving the required levels of proficiency no longer lies solely with the employer. Employees and the product teams they serve are also required to take responsibility to be suitably trained for the tasks they are asked to undertake.

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Health & Safety Executive Guides

The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) publishes the following guides & information to assist organisations with handling and training issues within the workplace:

- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR)
- Back in Work : Managing Back Pain in the Workplace (INDG333)
- Are You Making the Best Use of Lifting and Handling Aids? (INDG398)
- Manual Handling Assessment Chart (MAC)
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER)
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER)
- Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations (SMSR)
- Approved Code of Practice Guidelines (ACOP) Manual Handling Operators
- Relevant accredited training boards AITT, CITB, NPORS, RTITB
- Getting to Grips with Materials Handling

Specialist Training Provision

Stanley Handling is a comprehensive provider of certificated training courses. All our trainers are approved by the relevant authorities in areas that include:

- Manual Handling – including Risk Assessments
- Materials Handling Equipment
- Forklift Driver Training – novice & experiences
- Powered Stairclimbers – introduction, refresher & Train-the-Trainer

In all cases we can provide both standard and tailor-made operator and trainer courses plus refresher courses that can be carried out either at customer premises or at our Harpenden Training School.