

Pinnacle Pointers for Safety Group Programs

VOLUME 19 ISSUE 10 OCT. 2018

PINNACOL
ASSURANCE

*Editor's Note: Safety Group Program Monthly Newsletter Article – Oct. 2018
Contact: Mindy Carrothers (303.361.4790, mindy.carrothers@pinnacle.com)*

Identifying Unsafe Lifting at Your Worksite

In past issues, we've shared tips on safe lifting. But how can you identify which tasks are unsafe at your workplace? And are there resources that can help make your organization's employees more mindful of these lifting hazards?

Identifying unsafe lifting tasks

Step one is to identify which tasks are causing injuries. Step two is to investigate why these injuries are occurring.

Review records for trends — Review your workers' compensation claims for at least the past three years to identify injuries caused by manual material handling. Scour past near-miss worker reports or complaints, or conduct a symptoms survey so workers can identify ongoing musculoskeletal discomfort related to specific tasks. Request guidance from your Pinnacle safety consultant, too.

Observe work activities — Conduct regular walkabouts to observe employees' behavior and use of equipment. Here are some things to watch for: lifting while bending and reaching with the arms fully extended; lifting while bending and twisting; repetitive lifting from the floor or above shoulder height; lifting large or unwieldy objects; and workers who appear fatigued, perspire heavily or rush to keep pace with lifting requirements (e.g., loading a pallet with materials from a conveyor line).

Use assessment tools — A checklist or assessment tool documents what you're observing and helps identify the most critical risk factors for injury; therefore, it supports thorough follow-up to eliminate lifting hazards or take other corrective actions. Be aware, though, that generic checklists may not uncover all lifting hazards, and you may need to tailor a checklist to your specific workplace.

Most important, talk to your workers — Get their thoughts on safe-lifting challenges they experience. What works, in their opinion? What doesn't? Can they suggest alternatives to manual handling (e.g., tools or equipment)?

Pinnacol and other resources for worker awareness

For lifting procedures and a worksite poster, visit the lifting and ergonomics [webpage](#) at Pinnacol.com. Also available from Pinnacol's website are two simple [checklists](#) for manual material handling inspection and pushing/pulling inspection. Additionally, Pinnacol's site posts a publication that helps raise worker awareness: "[Ergonomic Guidelines for Manual Material Handling.](#)"

Other helpful resources include [OSHA's ergonomics webpage](#) and a calculator for analyzing lifting operations from Oregon OSHA, which can be used on mobile devices. An online tool from the [Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation](#) enables users to evaluate specific lifting tasks. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) also has a [mobile app that analyzes lifting tasks](#) to determine recommended weight limits. And the Center for Construction Research and Training offers mobile apps that can help workers identify unsafe lifting conditions.

We invite you to contact Pinnacol's Safety On Call at safetyoncall@pinnacol.com or 303.361.4700 or 888.501.4752. Our Safety Services team is available to help identify unsafe lifting hazards at your organization's workplace.

###