



Inspection campaign

In 2013/14, WorkSafe WA is conducting a proactive inspection campaign focusing on the floor covering retailing industry including ceramic tiles, with a view to improving safety within the industry. The campaign will involve Inspectors visiting retailing outlets to identify common safety risks and provide employers with information on how to comply with occupational safety and health requirements.

This newsletter has been developed to highlight safety risks and provide information on how to best manage those risks to minimise workplace injuries and comply with occupational safety and health legislation.

What are the most common RISKS for workers in floor covering retail?

The most common causes of injury in the floor covering retail industry are: performing manual tasks (i.e.) when handling, lifting, carrying, or putting down objects, falls from the same level, slip trip and falls, being hit by moving objects.

Controlling risks

Controlling the risk of injury may involve:

1. eliminating the hazard or hazardous task
2. re-designing, modifying, altering or substituting the hazard or hazardous task
3. administrative controls

Finally, when any control is implemented, make sure follow up and evaluation occurs to ensure that the control is adequately eliminating or minimising the risk and has not introduced new risks.

What is a RISK ASSESSMENT?

The occupational safety and health laws require risk assessments to be carried out.

A risk assessment is the process of determining whether there is a risk associated with an identified hazard, that is, whether there is any likelihood of injury or harm. The process should include consultation with people involved in the task, as well as consideration of the, experience and training of the operator, individual tasks to be performed and the length of time the operator is exposed to the identified hazards

What can you do before an inspector visits?

- Work through the checklists at the back of this publication to identify safety issues, then, using the risk rating table below, rate the risk, prioritise the issues and work out a plan to resolve any issues identified;
- Ensure your workers have received appropriate training for:
 - manual tasks;
 - slips, trips and falls; and
 - safety procedures;
- Ensure you have:
 - material safety data sheet for chemicals used in your workplace.

Training in MANUAL TASKS

Training for manual tasks should include both theoretical and practical (task specific) training for workers, and should occur both at induction for new staff, and on an ongoing basis thereafter. Task specific training should also be provided when tasks are about to be changed or introduced.

The level, length and type of training provided should be tailored and comparable to the risk involved and the role of the participants involved in the risk management process. Any training should focus on the specific problems identified in the assessment process and take on a participatory approach.

Theoretical training should cover a risk management approach, that is, workers should be able to identify manual task hazards, assess the risk of injury from exposure to those hazards, and determine what controls are needed to minimise the risk. When faced with their usual work tasks, this means that the worker should be able to identify those risk factors that may potentially make their work hazardous (for example, lifting above shoulder height or prolonged standing). They should also know what processes to follow to report hazards, so that these can be addressed by management.

Task specific training should include information such as preparing the layout and environment for the manual task; how to select and use equipment; and performing and maintaining safe work practices.

More information on training is available in the Code of practice: Manual tasks (2010), available for free download from www.worksafe.wa.gov.au. WorkSafe also has a free manual task training package available for employers to modify, adopt and use as their own, also available for download through the website.

Manual tasks cont...

Problems and solutions

The *Code of practice for manual tasks* provides practical guidance on the identification, assessment and control of risks associated with manual tasks at work.

Manual tasks likely to be a risk to workers' safety and health should be identified and assessed in detail to determine the nature and the extent of the problems.

It is important to consult with workers performing the tasks as they are likely to be aware of the risk of manual task injuries which may be associated with their jobs.

Risk control means finding solutions to the problems identified.

The following general problems and suggested solutions are examples of how manual handling injuries may be reduced.

Problems

Strain injuries may occur when:

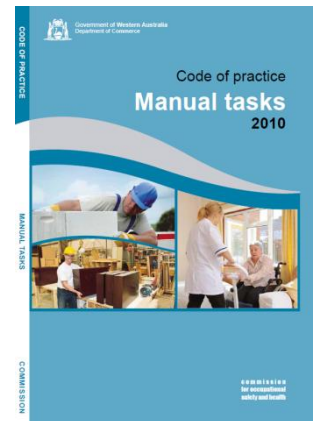
- the load is lifted from the floor, or from below mid-thigh height;
- reaching above shoulder height when stacking cartons on pallets;
- there is too much twisting and bending when placing cartons on a pallet;
- excessive forward reaching is required when placing cartons on the far side of a pallet;
- the cartons are too heavy when other risk factors, such as the number of cartons to be moved or the distance moved, are taken into account;
- the cartons are awkward to grasp due to their size and shape.

Solutions

Here are some ideas that may be used to avoid strain injuries.

The examples provided may need to be used in combination with each other. Other risk control strategies, for example training, form part of any well thought out solution.

- eliminate manual handling by using automatic carton stacking, vacuum suction, or hydraulic carton stacking;
- raise the work height, eg. use a platform with automatic height adjustment;
- use scissor platforms or tables;
- use swivel or tilt platforms;
- talk to your customers or suppliers about the size, shape and weight of cartons and their contents;
- reduce the weight of the carton;
- limit the height of the stack of cartons; and
- where team lifting is necessary, ensure a safe procedure is agreed and followed.



Material handling equipment

Material handling equipment includes pallets, forklifts, conveyor belts, automated storage and retrieval systems;

It is important that any material handling equipment is:

- available where required;
- meet Australian Standard where appropriate;
- suitable for task required;
- display safe work load information; and
- in good condition – maintained where required



Is your licence to operate a forklift current?

In 2007, important changes occurred to the requirements for forklift operation in Western Australia. The National Standard for Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work (National Licensing Standard) came into effect and required operators of forklifts to hold a licence to perform high risk work, such as:

Forklift truck - covers the operation of a powered industrial truck equipped with a mast and an elevating load carriage to which is attached a pair of forkarms or other attachment. This type of forklift is generally referred to as a counter-balance forklift.

Order picking forklift truck - covers the operation of a powered industrial truck of a type where the operator's control arrangement is incorporated with the load carriage/lifting, and elevates with it.

The National Licensing Standard replaces the National Certificate of Competency arrangements and allows forklift operators to work anywhere in Australia.

Incidents involving forklifts and other vehicles

Physical injuries caused by forklifts

WorkSafe have recently been investigating reported forklift incidents where persons have been physically injured by forklifts operating within the workplace.

One incident involved a forklift that was in the process of loading up a truck with pallets containing hardware product.

As the forklift was reversing back on an arc, the forklift counter weight knocked down another employee who was working on the concrete apron at the warehouse's dispatch area. The forklift operator failed to look over both shoulders during the reversing of the forklift. The forklift operator assumed no pedestrians would be present where the forklift was operating and loading product.

Another incident involved an employee being directly struck by the counterweight of a forklift when an item of plant was parked in the vicinity where this forklift was operating. As the operator of the plant got to the front of his machine, his right leg was pinned against the leading edge of the machine by the counterweight of the forklift as the forklift operator swung around during operation. The forklift operator never saw or heard the other machine in the vicinity of where the forklift was operating. The forklift operator did not sight the plant operator at the front of the machine until he was struck by the counterweight of the forklift.

In both these instances the forklift operator failed to properly observe the working area behind him before operating the forklift, which highlights the need for operator vigilance in all workplaces. It also emphasizes the need for an adequate traffic management plan in areas where forklifts operate.

Forklift driver dies in forklift accident

A forklift driver was fatally injured at a Balcatta Warehouse when the forklift he was driving reversed over the edge of a loading dock, dropping a distance of 1.15 metres landing on its rear, before rolling onto its right side. It is not clear whether the injuries sustained by the deceased were caused by his head being struck by a portion of the forklift or by a gas bottle from the forklift which had broken free.

At the time, the company had three forklifts on-site at the warehouse, all with similar foot control pedals and compatible operations. One of the forklifts had broken down and was considered to be nearing the end of its productive life. Therefore replacement forklifts were being trialled and assessed so that a decision could be made as to which forklift should be purchased. The forklift in question was one of those being trialled.

The forklift was manufactured in Germany and while the foot pedal operation differed to what was considered normal convention in Australia, it represented the normal foot pedal operation in Europe.

The deceased had just finished an instruction session on the operation of the forklift when the accident occurred. He had begun to unload goods from a truck and reversed the forklift away from the truck in an arc, carrying three wooden pallets. An eyewitness said he had expected the deceased to move forward, but instead the forklift appeared to accelerate backwards over the edge of the loading dock.

Safe movement of vehicles at workplaces

Vehicles and mobile plant moving in and around workplaces cause far too many occupational injuries and deaths in WA.

Reversing, loading, unloading and pedestrian movements are the activities most frequently linked to accidents. To avoid incidents, traffic and pedestrian movement needs to be designed, planned and controlled. Here are some tips for safe movement of vehicles:

- Design traffic routes so they are wide enough for the largest vehicle using them. They should be one-way (if possible) and have clearly signed traffic instructions.
- Separate pedestrian footpaths or walkways from traffic or make traffic routes wide enough for both vehicles and pedestrians. Use pedestrian barriers to prevent people walking in front of vehicles.
- Situate loading bays where vehicles can be manoeuvred easily and they are protected from adverse weather conditions.
- Raised loading platforms should be fitted with rails and raised wheel stop edges on the non-loading sides, to prevent people, forklifts or trolleys rolling over the edge.
- Mark reversing areas so drivers and pedestrians can see them easily. To reduce reversing accidents, place fixed mirrors at blind corners.
- Ensure that people directing traffic wear high-visibility clothing and that their signals can be seen clearly.

Hazardous substances

Safety priorities for working with hazardous substances

Lost time at work, illness and sometimes death are all outcomes of failing to store, use or dispose of hazardous substances properly. Great care is essential and following the information in this leaflet will reduce the risk of such serious outcomes.

Hazardous substances are any chemicals or other materials that may put people at risk. They include glues and solvents. Some substances may cause allergic reactions and other medical conditions of varying severity. Other substances may be corrosive, harmful or toxic.

Employers must identify any hazardous substances being used in their workplace and should question whether their use is essential. For example replace a hazardous substance with a safer one.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be provided for each hazardous substance, identifying the ingredients, and giving health information and precautions for safe use and handling. Continual vigilance is essential.

During their inspection, inspectors will be looking for many of the common problems affecting the handling of hazardous substances that WorkSafe has found in workplaces.

The elements of the checklist do not cover all mandatory requirements under workplace safety and health laws. However, following the checklist will assist you to identify any shortcomings in your procedures or training and to correct or update them, thus helping you started meet your safety and health responsibilities.

In looking at safety in relation to hazardous substances and all workplace safety matters, please remember the three ThinkSafe steps:

- spot the hazard;
- assess the risk; and
- make the changes.

How do I know if a substance is hazardous?

The material safety data sheet (MSDS) should contain an upfront statement like:

- this product is hazardous according to the criteria of the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC)
- this product is not hazardous according to the criteria of the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC).

Words, such as "WARNING", "POISON" or "HAZARDOUS", on the label or information in the health hazards section of the MSDS that the substance is "toxic", "corrosive", "a sensitizer", "a carcinogen", "a teratogen" or "a mutagen" would mean that it is hazardous.

If you are not sure whether you have a hazardous substance or not then contact your supplier or the manufacturer/importer and ask for the current MSDS. MSDS are updated regularly and must be less than 5 years old

Material Safety Data Sheets

Many materials used at the workplace are classified as hazardous substances such as glues and solvents. The law requires that safety and health information must be provided to workplaces in the form of Material Safety Data Sheets and labels so that the hazardous substances can be used safely.

What is a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)?

A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is a document that provides information about a hazardous substance and how it should be used and how to avoid harm when using it at the workplace.

MSDS cont...

To comply with the law in Western Australia, an MSDS for a hazardous substance will describe its properties and uses, including:

- **the identity of the hazardous substance**
eg product information to identify the hazardous substance(s) and basic information on uses;
- **chemical and physical properties**
eg physical description including description of the mixture or formulation if applicable;
- **health hazard information**
eg health effects from exposure and first aid information;
- **precautions for use**
eg correct application and common uses, ventilation requirements, equipment for personal protection and information on flammability; and
- **safe handling information**
eg safe storage in the workplace, safe transporting, dealing with spills and disposal and information for fire fighting and emergency services.

An employer, main contractor or self-employed person must:

- Be provided with an MSDS either before or on the first occasion that the hazardous substance is supplied to the workplace. If an MSDS is requested, then an MSDS must be provided on the subsequent supply of the hazardous substance to the workplace.
- Consult with all people who might be exposed to the hazardous substance at the workplace about the intention to use the hazardous substance at the workplace and the safest methods of using it.
- Ensure that an MSDS for each hazardous substance is readily available to any person at the workplace who might be exposed to the substance(s).
- Ensure that no alteration is made to an MSDS. The only exception is where the employer is also the importer of the hazardous substance and an overseas MSDS requires alteration to conform with the regulations relating to MSDSs in Western Australia.

When is an MSDS required at the workplace?

A current MSDS must be obtained by employers and must be made readily available to employees who may be exposed at the workplace whenever a hazardous substance is used. It is important to ensure that MSDSs are readily available and accessible in the workplace, so that they can be easily located in an emergency, such as fire.

When must an MSDS be supplied?

There are three instances when an MSDS must be supplied:

- when a hazardous substance is provided to a workplace;
- when a hazardous substance is subsequently purchased and the MSDS is requested; and
- when a potential or existing purchaser makes a request for an MSDS.

When does an MSDS expire?

The information in MSDSs must be kept current. MSDSs must be updated by the manufacturer or importer as often as reasonably possible to keep them current and at a minimum of every five years.

The employer should check the dates of all MSDSs and ensure that all MSDSs at the workplace are current.

Warning on stacking practices

In January 2008 a 37-year-old man died when he was struck by steel that fell when racking collapsed.

WorkSafe would like to remind workplaces that it is crucial that stacked goods are secured in position and do not exceed their capacity to remain in place because the outcome may be tragic.

Employers whose workplaces include areas where goods are stacked need to ensure the risk of injury is minimised by using a system for securely racking and/or strapping the goods.

The risk of manual handling injuries from stacking needs to be minimised, and workers engaged in the storage, movement and handling of heavy materials need to be adequately trained to undertake the tasks safely.

WorkSafe strongly urges employers to ensure that safe systems of work are in place and implemented at all times to minimise the risk of any further deaths or serious injuries which may involve the stacking of goods.

Checklists

Systems for Manual tasks safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Notifiable accidents reported to WorkSafe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LTI/LTD accidents and notified hazards investigated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees have received induction and on the job training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of systems to identify manual task hazards (eg regular walkthroughs; inspections; analysis of hazard, injury and incident reports; hazard reporting system; consultation with employees/ OSH reps/ supervisors; task observation or task analysis)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have risk assessments been completed for reported manual task hazards? Evidence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manual handling training – provided? Aligned with Code of Practice (Risk Management is taught)? Refreshed? Theory & practical? Evidence of training records?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do work processes minimise unnecessary or double/multiple handling from goods receipt to location in shop front?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are staff provided with adequate rest breaks from tasks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are deliveries spread across the week to avoid peaks in manual handling requirements on any one day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a preventative maintenance program in place for equipment (eg trolleys, ladders, pallet jacks), including regular inspection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Loading docks safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
What exists to prevent the risk of any wheel being driven (or pedestrian falling) over an edge? For example – raised edges, high contrast colour edge, pedestrian access restricted, loading dock chained off when truck not there	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are forklifts used on loading dock area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is loading dock exposed to weather?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the loading dock surface in good condition and appropriate surface to minimise slips/trips?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is loading dock easily accessible/ not congested? (access is not obstructed)?			
Are systems in place to minimise pedestrian access in forklift areas? What is the risk of collision between forklifts/ trucks and pedestrians?			
Is there a dock leveller in place? Is it functional? Is manual available? Are controls clearly labelled? No lip/ raised edge created? Are staff trained to operate dock levellers? Are there training records of same?			
Does loading dock cater to both side and rear loading trucks?			
Are edges of loading docks highlighted in high contrast colours?			
Are external doors in good condition and easily opened?			

Storage safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Is stock stored on pallets/ shelving to an appropriate/ safe height?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is stock stored on shelves to an appropriate depth (does not require extensive reach to rear stock)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is stock stable with minimal risk of falling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are heaviest items stored between knee and chest height?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is equipment available to assist?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is equipment stored in an accessible location close to where it's needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there sufficient space in which to work and use equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are empty pallets moved safely and securely stored?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any pallet lifters or pallet stands to increase height of pallets when unloading items at low levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pallets located so that all sides of the pallet are accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are floor/ store locations clearly marked to show where pallets should be placed? (or alternatively, are walkways clearly marked?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Hazardous substances [safety checklist](#)

Check	yes	no	n/a
The register of hazardous substances is complete and current. The register includes a contents list and material safety data sheets (MSDS) for all hazardous substances, such as cleaning products, used from time to time at the workplace. The MSDS are < 5 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decanted bottles containing hazardous or other substances are labelled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The outcome of the risk assessment for all hazardous substances is recorded in the hazardous substances register	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hierarchy of Control for practicable control measures have been implemented and maintained.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People who have been exposed or work with hazardous substances have been provided with adequate information, instruction and training. Record of training includes health effects, controls, safe work methods, PPE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Equipment [safety checklist](#)

Check	yes	no	n/a
Detail ladders/ steps available:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are ladders in good condition (and meet Australian Standards)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ladders appropriate for uses? (eg commercial/ industrial rating, platform style ladder, easily mobile, adequate height)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are ladders stored? Does storage location encourage use (ie adjacent to areas where needed)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sufficient numbers of ladders/ steps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detail types of trolleys available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are trolleys in good condition? (inspect handles, castors, platforms for ease of use, build up of dirt etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are trolleys appropriate for use? are the types of handles appropriate? Are the trolleys too high to see over?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are trolleys stored? Does storage location encourage use (ie adjacent to areas where needed)?			
Sufficient numbers of trolleys?			
Is flooring kept clear, clean and free of debris/ obstructions to allow ease of trolley use?			

Forklift/ Pallet Jacks safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Are forklifts operated only by staff with appropriate, current licensing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are forklift servicing/ inspection records readily available and up to date?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are daily pre-start checklists completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the forklift generally in good condition? Check seating, tyres, tines, seatbelt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are observed operators wearing seatbelts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are keys kept in a safe location (not in forklift, not easily accessible by public)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are forklifts speed-limited?			
Are pallet jacks (manual or motorised) used?			
Are staff trained in appropriate use of pallet jacks?			
Are pallet jacks in good condition & regularly maintained?			
Are pallet jacks stored in safe, accessible location to encourage use?			
Are pallet jacks labelled with a safe working limit?			
Are pallets overloaded with stock, causing excessive push/pull forces required for moving pallets with pallet jacks?			

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