



MANUAL HANDLING INJURY

Details of Incident

An employee was operating a cement plastic packing line. Due to an issue with the machine, some cement bags on the pallet partially collapsed as they exited the palletiser (a palletiser is a machine which provides automatic means for stacking cement bags onto a wooden pallet). Subsequently manual intervention by the operator was necessary to push the partially loaded pallet forward on the roller conveyor, clear of the machinery. Whilst undertaking this activity, the operator felt discomfort in his upper right thigh and the pain worsened over the following 30 minutes. An ambulance attended site and the employee was transferred to hospital, where it was diagnosed that he suffered a tear to an abductor muscle in his right leg.

Key Findings

- During the shift there was an intermittent fault on the palletiser.
- The employee had undergone manual handling training recently; receiving a toolbox talk, covering aspects of manual handling techniques.
- The force required to move the pallet on the roller conveyor was measured and not considered excessive; however, a restricted working area and awkward body positioning probably made the application of force more difficult.

How Could This Incident Have Been Avoided?

- By eliminating the machine fault, and thereby preventing the need for manual intervention.

Key Review Points

Is there a procedure in place for reporting and communicating faults on equipment?

Are procedures evaluated and changes properly reassessed before continuing with work activities?

Do we challenge accepted practices to ensure we always adopt the safest method of work to complete a job?



Manual Handling

Use mechanical aids or ask for help to reduce risks.

Look after yourself and each other

Don't let anyone act unsafely, always stop unsafe practices.

Housekeeping

Keep designated access routes and work areas tidy and free from trip/slip hazards.

Tools and Equipment

Use the right, well maintained, tools/equipment for the job. Never make do.

Incident/Hazard alerts

Report all incidents/hazards immediately.