

RISKS IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

THE STEPS TO SAFETY

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Your employees are at the heart of any plan for safety.

MEMIC
Partners for Workplace Safety

Call 1•888•887•8867

This publication will reveal some facts about your industry which will help you understand and reduce the costs of workplace injuries. We hope that this information will help you to **assess your workplace and to make it as safe and productive as it can be**. But if you need help, call us.

MEMIC data analysis indicates the following are areas of concern in the retail industry. The following list of problems with recommended solutions that — if put into practice — can help make your place of business safer.

1. Material Handling

In the retail industry, many jobs require the handling of merchandise either in bulk form (when it arrives from the wholesaler) or in its individual form at the cash register. Back injuries account for more than one-third of all injuries in the retail industry. An average back injury incurs workers' comp costs of between \$17,000 and \$21,000. To help eliminate these types of injuries, you should:

- **Use and maintain lift-aid equipment** such as hand carts, dollies, portable scissor-lift carts, pallet jacks and stationary rollers. Use these routinely rather than lifting and moving materials by hand.
- **When materials must be moved by hand**, use appropriate body positioning. Avoid lifting from the floor level. Avoid extended reaching away from the body when moving materials. Avoid lifting overloaded trays, especially in awkward positions. Get help to avoid heavy lifting.
- **Implement a stretching program**. Appropriate stretching will help your workers to loosen muscles and avoid the injuries that come as a result of handling stock.

2. Storage and Stacking

Injuries often occur because of stocked items. There are some simple ways to eliminate these types of injuries. You can:

- **Ensure that the design** for the layout of your store prevents congested aisles and delivery areas. You should also make sure that stockpiles are not near doors, passageways or other walkways.
- **Make sure that stock cannot fall** and hurt an employee or a customer by enforcing some basic rules about storage. Do not allow objects stacked on shelves to hang over the edge of the shelf. Limit the stacking of the top riser shelf to a single row. Ensure that all shelves are anchored securely and the top cannot move.

3 Housekeeping

Keeping floor areas clear of tripping hazards such as debris, electrical cords, overstocked product and other equipment can reduce slips, trips and falls which cause easily preventable injuries. Also, make sure repairs are made in a timely fashion and that ice and snow are removed as soon as possible. These hazards can be avoided.

4 Employee Behavior, Supervision and Safety Management Methods

Your employees are at the heart of any plan for safety. But they, too, must be ready and able to accept some responsibility in making the workplace safe. As an employer you must do your part to select employees who can and will meet this responsibility. To help accomplish this, you should:

- **Select employees through** a careful screening process;
- **Provide orientation to tasks** and their safe execution *before* the employee begins work;
- **Train in safe operating procedures** by a formal method (including demonstration) to assure that employees understand how to safely complete tasks;
- **Require that the employee be accountable** for safe work practices in the course of routine job performance by including safety as part of every performance appraisal, or progressive discipline;
- **Provide ongoing safety training.**



The Fact File

Retail Industry Top Injury Sources

1. Another person
2. Floor/ground surface
3. Containers
4. Plant/industrial vehicle
5. Handtools
6. Waste/debris
7. Cases, cabinets, shelves
8. Skids, pallets
9. Fasteners, ropes

Body Part Injured

Head/Neck	6%
Back	29%
Arm/hand	28%
Trunk/chest	7%
Lower body	17%
Internal system	2%
Multiple	11%

Occupations in Retail Industry with Injuries

1. Cashier
2. Stockhandler
3. Truck driver
4. Supervisor
5. Auto mechanic



5 Personal Protective Equipment

You must provide and train in the proper use of whatever personal protective equipment is appropriate for the given job, including:

- **Eye Protection:** safety goggles or glasses;
- **Safety Clothing:** safety shoes, gloves or other clothing;
- **Bloodborne Pathogens:** Training, equipment and materials for proper treatment and disposal of blood from cuts or other injuries that could occur at the worksite.