

Wholesale/retail trade sector employers BWC, NIOSH partner to offer safety intervention savings

BWC and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) are partnering to research ways to create a safer work environment for employees working for employers in the wholesale/retail trade sector. The study will analyze the effects of adding equipment to a work process (e.g., stair-climbing powered hand trucks, truck-lift gates, etc.) and if the addition reduces injuries, on the job, to the back and shoulder areas. Employers participating in the study can get grant money from BWC to help purchase the engineering controls needed for the improvements.

The BWC SafetyGrant\$ Program will provide a 2-to-1 matching grant (up to \$40,000)* to employers to help purchase equipment. To take advantage of this opportunity, an employer must agree he or she will provide information for the study before the equipment is put in place and for two years after installation. BWC and NIOSH will evaluate information gathered to determine the cost effectiveness of these equipment interventions in reducing occupational injuries. The goal is to provide the wholesale/retail industry with information to help reduce injuries/ illness and improve work processes.

More details about the study

- NIOSH designed this study and asked BWC to partner with it to collect research to identify work procedures and equipment that provide safer conditions for employees.
 - BWC and NIOSH would like two control groups of 40 employers each to participate in the study. The first group will receive money to add equipment in winter 2011. The second group will receive funding to add engineered controls in spring 2012.
 - NIOSH will seek employee volunteers from each employer to answer surveys to rate back and shoulder pain before and after using the engineering controls. *(NIOSH will not share personal identifying information of the volunteer employees with BWC or employers.)*
 - BWC will provide NIOSH with workers' compensation information, but it will code data so that NIOSH will not receive individual names.
 - BWC will ask employers for information about absenteeism, delivery quality and productivity. (BWC will share a summary of all information gathered to NIOSH without specifics about company identifiers.)
- BWC and NIOSH hope all employers interested in benefiting from this special grant opportunity will apply for funding by fall 2011. Participation will be on a first come first serve basis.
 - Participants should be wholesale/retail trade employers or similar companies performing delivery operations of large items (e.g., appliances, furniture, vending machines, furnaces, water heaters, keg beverages, etc.) that pay into the State Insurance Fund.

In 2010, 914,160 Ohioans worked for 34,407 wholesale/retail trade sector employers.

- Retailers that sell to the public from stores accounted for 72 percent of these employers.
- Wholesalers that sell to other businesses from warehouses or offices made up the other 28 percent.
- A significant number of these companies also deliver goods and/or install merchandise.
- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) account for 40 percent of lost-time Occupational Safety and Health Administration recordables in this industry.
- Sprains/strains – mostly due to manual materials handling involving high force, awkward postures and repetition – account for 77 percent of these MSDs.

Need more information?

You can find more information and the SafetyGrant\$ application at: <http://www.ohiobwc.com/employer/programs/safety/emigrants.asp>.

Employers can also e-mail questions to the contacts below.

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*grants conditional upon funds available