Case Study 6113

Intervention key words
Rail system, station redesign

Industry
Service: Dry cleaning

Risk factors
Manual handling – pushing/ pulling

Situation

At this dry cleaning facility, to transport laundry between different areas, workers must push loaded laundry carts up ramps. These carts can weigh up to 150 pounds. Workers have to push them throughout the facility to fill orders. This company has expanded over the years, allowing it to purchase storefronts next door. This expansion led to a building layout that does not encourage workflow. Many walls are in the way of the workers. Thus, to complete an order, workers must walk through extra rooms and expose themselves to unnecessary hazards and cleaning chemicals.

Solution

To reduce the risk factors associated with this operation, the employer re-designed the facility and purchased a rail system to move the clothes. For the redesign, the employer removed some walls and cut openings in the others. The employer then moved equipment, so work could flow in a U shape, making it more efficient. Instead of manually moving the laundry, workers now place clothes on the rail system, which transports the laundry through the facility. The total cost of re-designing the facility was $52,210.

Results

- The incident rate (standardized per 200,000 hours worked) decreased from 2.66 the two years prior to the intervention to 0.0 during the two years following, a 100-percent improvement.
- Using National Safety Council's data on the average cost of a claim of $19,382, the return on investment was 2.69 years.
- The redesign of the facility, allows the production to be much more efficient, and the quality of the final product has improved.