

Wholesale-retail trade/material handling grant

BWC, NIOSH partner to offer grants to improve safety

BWC and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) are partnering to research ways to create a safer work environment in wholesale-retail trade and other industries. Research will focus on industries that have delivery, installation, receiving or other material handling tasks.

The study will analyze the effects of adding equipment to a material handling process (e.g., stair-climbing powered hand trucks, truck-lift gates, lift tables, pallet positioners, carts, etc.) .It will also determine if the added equipment and if the addition reduces injuries to the back and shoulder areas.

Matching grants

The BWC SafetyGrant\$ Program will provide a 2-to-1 matching grant (up to \$40,000)* to employers to help purchase equipment. Participants should be employers performing material handling operations of large/heavy or multiple stacked items that pay into the State Insurance Fund. Typical items would include appliances, furniture, vending machines, furnaces, water heaters, keg beverages, construction materials, food products, etc.

To take advantage of this opportunity, an employer must agree to provide information for the study before putting the equipment 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 employers with information to help reduce injuries/illness and improve material handling 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.
- Upon approval, BWC will notify each company and let them know if they will receive funding immediately or six months from the grant approval date.

- 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.)

Did you know?

Workplace injuries and illnesses cost more than \$50 billion nationwide per year in direct workers compensation costs. More than 40 percent of the costs are due to sprains/ strains and other disorders caused by tasks involving high force, awkward postures and repetition.

Need more information?

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

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

Mike Lampl, BWC

Michael.L.1@bwc.state.oh.us

Steve Wurzelbacher, NIOSH

swurzelbacher@cdc.gov

**grants conditional upon funds available*