

Loss Control *and you*

Workstation Ergonomics

By [Mike Huss](#)
Loss Control Supervisor

The modern office presents a variety of unique injury exposures. These new risks call for a new way of viewing workplace safety in these environments. At the heart of this new viewpoint is the study and practice of ergonomics. Due to the increasing rate of injuries from computer use, many companies are purchasing ergonomically designed workstations. A few dollars spent on a well-designed workstation not only improves comfort, but also increases productivity. A study by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, found there was an increase in work performance at well-designed workstations.

While newly purchased workstations may be a sound investment, many existing workstations can be made ergonomically sound by adjusting what is already there. It is also important to keep workstations clean and clutter free. When setting up a workstation keep the following in mind.

- **Chairs:** should have adjustments for height, seat depth, tilt, a sliding back, adjustable armrests and lumbar support. Adjust chairs so that employees can comfortably rest both feet on the floor with knees at 90°, with a 2-3 inch gap between the edge of the seat and back of the knees while their lower back is fully supported.
- **Desk Height:** can be easily adjusted by the adjustment screws or using risers. If the desk cannot be raised or lowered, a slide-out/articulating

keyboard tray may be needed. The goal is to allow employees to rest their forearms on the flat surface of the desk. Properly adjusting the chair and desk should eliminate many of the most common ergonomic problems.

- **Keyboards:** wrist rests should be used to keep the wrists in a neutral position. Close or raise the legs on the bottom of the keyboard as needed to maintain straight wrists. Center the spacebar in front of you -- not the keyboard. The top of the keyboard should be just below elbow height. A great deal of money is spent on ergonomic keyboards that simply do not work. Evaluate the employee's workstation before purchasing a new keyboard.
- **Monitor/Screens:** should be placed directly in front of you with the top of the screen about 10 to 20 degrees below your horizontal line of sight. Tilt monitor up about 10 to 20 degrees.
- **Mouse:** should be at the same level and height as your keyboard, slightly below elbow height in order to prevent awkward postures, contact stress or forceful hand exertions. Avoid bending the wrist. Use a wrist/palm rest to promote neutral wrist posture.
- **Document Holder:** may reduce or eliminate risk factors such as awkward head and neck postures, fatigue, headaches and eye strain. They should be placed at or about the same height and distance as the monitor or directly beneath the monitor.
- **Eye Fatigue:** remember the

20/20/20 rule (every 20 minutes focus on an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds). Blink at regular intervals to moisten eyes. Alternate duties with other non-computer tasks to provide rest for your eyes.

- **Breaks:** help prevent work-related injuries without decreasing productivity. Take a 2 minute break every 30-45 minutes. Stand up, stretch, make copies, file, etc. The goal is to not stop working, but to change your position.
- **Telephone:** keep it close to avoid reaching. Avoid cradling the phone between neck and shoulder. As a rule, use a headset if phone use is greater than an hour per day.
- **Glare:** position the face of the display screen at right angles to windows and light sources. Use blinds or drapes to eliminate bright light. Clean the monitor frequently as dust can contribute to glare.

Safety & Health Calendar and News Briefs

By [Kim Coonrod](#)
Loss Control Manager

December 2009 — [National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month](#)

January 2010 — [National Radon Action Month](#)

February 2010—[American Heart Month](#)

California Safety Incentives

Small employers in California may qualify for up to \$2,500 in reimbursements for workplace modifications that help bring an injured employee back to the job. Full

details on this program are available [HERE](#).

Nevada Mandates OSHA Training

As of January 1st of 2010, Nevada is requiring all construction workers to complete a 10-Hour Safety training course. Construction supervisors will be required to take a 30-Hour course.



OSHA Cracking Down on Improper Recordkeeping

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has recently begun a special program to focus on workplace injury recordkeeping. OSHA will be inspecting safety records and enforcing regulatory requirements if employers' data is inaccurate. This program will focus primarily on high risk occupations. More details on this OSHA program can be found [HERE](#).

Lessons from Losses

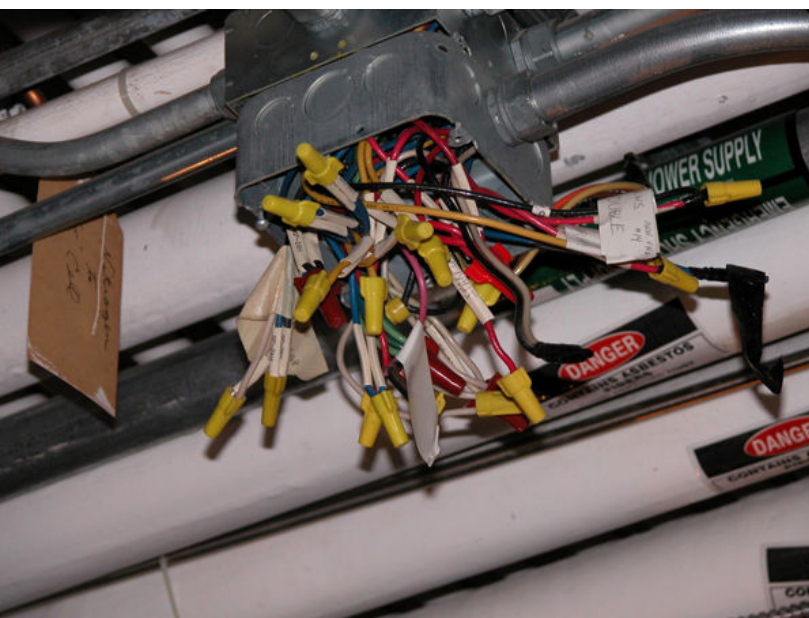
By [Courtney Rosengartner](#)
Loss Control Coordinator

Loss: A 24 year-old warehouse employee was riding on the elevated forks of a forklift pulling products from a shelf six feet from the ground. The forklift struck an object causing the worker to fall to the ground, landing on both feet. He suffered an injury to his right knee as well as third degree sprains and torn tendons in both ankles. As a result, he endured surgery that kept him off of his feet for six weeks followed by intensive physical therapy. Aside from the physical pain that he suffered, the total incurred cost for his injury was over \$70,000.

Lesson: No one should ever stand on the forks of a powered industrial truck. A forklift is not a scaffold or taxi. No one should lift or transport people under any circumstance.

Most forklift injuries to personnel can be attributed to a lack of safe operating procedures, lack of safety-rule enforcement or insufficient training. Employers must comply with OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.178 which requires that any employee who uses a forklift must be trained and certified in the operation of forklifts. For more information on forklift training and certification—as well as safety tips—

Photo of the Quarter Junction Box Jitters



please see this material from [OSHA](#) and the [US Naval Safety Center](#).

Did You Know? It is a violation of federal law for anyone under 18 years of age to operate a forklift as well as anyone who is not properly trained and certified.

Light up the Season— Safety

By [Mike Huss](#)
Loss Control Supervisor

Festive lights add sparkle to the holidays. Be sure to celebrate safely by following these simple tips:

1. Check holiday lights for frayed cords, loose connections and broken sockets, then replace—don't repair—damaged ones.
2. Purchase lights that are certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories.
3. Spread holiday lights among several wall sockets, extension cords and circuits to prevent overloads and fires. Follow manufacturer recommendations for stringing strands of lights together.
4. Make sure that any exterior lights are designed for that application. Do not use indoor lights for exterior decorations.

5. Attach lights using hooks, never staple, nail or tack electric cords.
6. For exterior lights, use ground fault circuit interrupter outlets only.
7. Keep outdoor extension cord connections dry by elevating and taping them.
8. Make sure tree light bulbs don't touch needles, branches, gifts or water.
9. Unplug lights when unattended for long periods of time.

For safer candle use, follow these tips:

1. Keep candles at least one foot away from other materials and away from drafts.
2. Never leave a burning candle unattended.
3. Place candles only in receptacles that are stable, nonflammable and heat-resistant.

Toolbox Safety Series

By [Nick Gustafson](#)
Loss Control Coordinator

Did you know *FirstComp offers a variety of loss control services? Many of these services are available to all policyholders, for free! Each quarter, we will highlight a FirstComp loss control service and how it can help your clients reduce claims.*

Toolbox Safety Talks are an easy and effective way to communicate safety priorities to your employees. By holding regular safety meetings and documenting topics and attendance you can encourage employee responsibility, reduce claim frequency and severity, and ensure accountability throughout your organization. FirstComp Loss Control has a wide variety of meeting topics available for use by any policyholder. For more information, contact the Loss Control department at (888) 500-3344 or losscontrol@firstcomp.com.

For information about any of FirstComp's Loss Control Services, please call (888) 500-3344 or email losscontrol@firstcomp.com

Focus Class Code: Retail and Wholesale Operations



FirstComp covers a wide variety of Main Street small businesses. Every quarter, this space will focus on a common class code and the unique loss exposures it reflects. This issue we're focusing on Retail and Wholesale Operations.

[Chemical Hazard Communication - OSHA](#)

[Emergency Plans and Procedures eTool - OSHA](#)

[Ergonomic Guidelines for Manual Material Handling - CAL/OSHA](#)

[Back Safety Course - Free-Training.com](#)

[Grocery Warehousing Ergonomics eTool - OSHA](#)

[Health and Safety Guide for New Retail Workers - WorkSafeBC](#)

[Materials Handling and Storage - OSHA](#)

[Preventing Violence, Robbery, and Theft - WorkSafeBC](#)

[Preventing Deaths and Injuries While Compacting or Baling Refuse Material - NIOSH Alert](#)

[Powered Industrial Trucks \(Forklift\) eTool - OSHA](#)

[Preventing Injuries from Slips, Trips and Falls - Univ. of Florida](#)