



THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE SAFETY & THE BOTTOM LINE

Employers have a responsibility to protect their employees. Providing a safe work environment is of the utmost importance — a responsibility that should not be taken lightly. Not only is it ethically the right thing to do, but it can mean the difference between being in the red or the black.



Employees are a company's number one asset, and by far its most valuable investment. When an employee is injured, not only does the individual suffer, but so does the company and the company's bottom line. Back injuries account for 20% of all injuries and illnesses in the workplace. Companies can mitigate the costs associated with on-the-job accidents due to lifting-related injuries by providing employees with the proper training and tools. Lightweight, portable cranes are smart tools that effectively safeguard employees from injury and all the associated repercussions.

It is recommended that company leadership be proactive in developing a strong safety culture—involving every member of the team from field technicians to the risk management department, focusing on:

1. Implementing effective workplace safety protocols
2. Providing the correct tools and training for employees to do their jobs safely
3. Seeking advice from risk management experts
4. Understanding indirect and direct costs associated with having an injured employee
5. Protecting the business from legal liability

The Injury Ripple Effect

Take a field technician, for example, who has recently been injured on the job. Despite never incurring an injury at work during his long tenure with the company, he recently herniated a spinal disc while lifting heavy equipment by himself. The company's safety protocols required technicians to obtain the assistance of another technician when lifting equipment over 50 pounds per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommendation. However, the technician often took the path of least resistance and lifted equipment unassisted; this time resulting in a life-changing injury.

This case underlies an important issue for companies. Had the technician been provided with the necessary tools to assist with lifting heavy equipment, the temptation of taking the path of least of resistance would have been removed and the injury avoided. Unfortunately, as a result of this injury, the technician was unable to return to work. The company faced a liability suit, an increase in their workers' compensation premium, and a disruption in the workflow.

Workers' compensation is designed to help mitigate the financial burden resulting from a workplace injury, providing a number of benefits including wage replacement, medical treatment, and vocational rehabilitation. The total number of workers' comp pay outs per week is staggering. U.S. employers pay almost \$1 billion per week for direct workers' compensation claims¹.

In total, the National Safety Council estimated in 2012 the cost of fatal and non-fatal work injuries at \$198 billion in direct costs.

BE PROACTIVE IN DEVELOPING A STRONG SAFETY CULTURE. INVOLVE EVERY MEMBER OF THE TEAM FROM FIELD TECHNICIANS TO THE RISK MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT.





IT COSTS COMPANIES \$1 BILLION PER WEEK IN DIRECT WORKER COMPENSATION. MANY OF THESE INJURIES ARE DUE TO EMPLOYEES HANDLING LOADS THAT ARE TOO HEAVY FOR THEM.

The Price of Direct & Indirect Costs

It's estimated that total direct costs (hiring process, training, etc.) of replacing an employee — whether he or she leaves because of an injury or because of a new job — can be as high as 50-60% of an employee's annual salary. The total costs (including direct and indirect costs) associated with turnover are estimated to be as high as 150-200% of an employee's annual salary².

Direct costs include absence due to injury and other transition costs. Indirect costs include the loss of production and reduced performance. Turnover costs (no matter the cause) include:

- ▶ Recruitment of replacements
- ▶ Administrative hiring costs
- ▶ Lost productivity associated with the time between the loss of the employee and hiring a replacement
- ▶ Lost productivity due to a new employee learning the job
- ▶ Lost productivity associated with co-workers helping the new employee
- ▶ Costs related to training
- ▶ Costs associated with the employee's lack of motivation prior to leaving
- ▶ Sometimes, the costs of trade secrets and proprietary information shared by the employee who leaves
- ▶ Public relations costs³

In the case of the injured field technician, the direct and indirect costs were substantial for the company. The absence of an experienced field technician placed a burden on the other technicians who had to cover the injured technician's workload, resulting in an increase of overtime pay.

When the company eventually hired and trained a new employee, there were other additional costs that needed to be factored in. It took time for the new employee to become seasoned; he inevitably wasn't as productive as the injured employee, and made mistakes that came at a cost to the company as he learned the ropes.

Losing an employee can also negatively impact customer service. Overloading a technician with additional work during the interval between an employee leaving and a new one being hired and fully trained makes it hard for the remaining technicians to deliver high-quality work and the good service customers have come to expect. For service-oriented companies in particular, an erosion of work quality and customer service could result in loss of revenue and a loss of customers.





From a purely operational standpoint, it pays to invest in the training and equipment needed to allow employees to do their jobs in the safest manner possible.

Common Job Site Injuries

The reality for American workers across all industries today is that injuries are far too common, numbering in the millions annually.

The most common injuries among employees are musculoskeletal, with many being caused by repetitive loading and unloading, lifting, and carrying. Liberty Mutual estimates that musculoskeletal disorders cost employers about \$15 billion per year⁴. Typically, technicians injure themselves carrying materials weighing between 50 and 200 pounds. This is because many technicians feel they can lift these loads without assistance. OSHA recommends anything over 50 pounds be lifted by more than one person or with an assistive device⁵.

The scale of these injuries isn't only reflected in the costs involved. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), **back injuries account for one of every five, or 20%, all injuries and illnesses in the workplace.** The vast majority (80%) of these injuries occur to the lower back, and are largely associated with manual materials handling tasks⁶.

The four most common activities that can put a technician at risk for a variety of musculoskeletal injuries, include:

1. **High-frequency and long-duration lifting**, such as unloading.
2. **Awkward postures** such as bending while lifting, or carrying loads on one shoulder or under an arm.
3. **Weight of objects:** According to OSHA, lifting loads heavier than 50 pounds will increase the risk of injury.
4. **Inadequate handholds:** These make lifting more difficult and put far more stress on the body.

There is a two-fold path to avoiding these types of injuries. First, make sure employees are fully trained on the correct way to load and unload cargo, lift and carry materials, and how to avoid injuries caused by these repetitive activities. Second, provide the proper tools needed to help employees with repetitive tasks, such as loading and unloading, lifting and carrying heavy materials.

1
Major
Injury

29
Minor
Injury

300
Near
Misses

Heinrich 300-29-1 Model

American Engineer H.W. Heinrich posited that for every major injury there are 29 minor injuries and 300 near misses. In later iterations of his ratio, Heinrich identified that 88% of workplace accidents were caused by unsafe acts (typically by the injured party), 10% were the result of unsafe equipment or conditions, and the remaining 2% were unavoidable. In other words, 98% of workplace accidents are avoidable.



SpitzLift: A Smart Solution

Taking a holistic view of workplace injuries — both how to avoid them and their cost to the entire enterprise — is a valuable first step in developing safety techniques and identifying the tools that will keep technicians injury-free and productive, while protecting the company's bottom line.

SpitzLift cranes are an ideal solution to mitigate musculoskeletal injuries. They are designed to lift loads between 50 and 900 pounds. The crane does the heavy, repetitive lifting, reducing the risk of injury, and improving overall safety. Sometimes it is difficult to get technicians to integrate a new tool and adopt a new way of doing things. SpitzLift cranes are highly regarded by field technicians, because of their ease of use. The cranes can quickly become a path of least resistance, creating a safer work environment.

Providing employees with a lightweight lifting solution illustrates that safety matters and safeguarding employees from injury is an integral part of the culture of the company. The payoff is significant — happier, safer, more productive employees, and a stronger bottom line that benefits the company and employees alike. Everybody wins.

ABOUT SPITZLIFT

SpitzLift Manufacturing, founded in 1999, is recognized as a leader in the small crane and lifting industry. SpitzLift is a robust, lightweight, aluminum crane that is proudly manufactured in the U.S.A. Our user-friendly lifting solutions are perfect for most applications. SpitzLift cranes are payload efficient, cost effective, and mitigate workplace injuries.

SpitzLift uses state-of-the-art research and development to maintain its progressive position in the marketplace. Our focus on continuous product improvement and innovation allows us to continue to deliver cutting-edge lifting solutions. Our design and engineering team are continually engaged in meeting custom applications to meet customer needs.

SpitzLift Manufacturing is proud of our growing global presence and our reputation for delivering high quality products for over 18 years. We welcome the opportunity to work with you in addressing your lifting needs, safeguarding your employees from injury, and protecting your bottom line.

Contact SpitzLift at: 619-713-5061 or visit the company website at www.spitzlift.com

SAFETY AND THE ART OF BUSINESS SURVIVAL

It can't be stressed enough; safety will not only contribute to employee wellbeing, but is a critical factor in helping ensure the longevity of the business.

A study published in *Industrial Health* found a correlation between workplace safety, health, and small business survival. The researchers found that businesses that failed within one to two years of starting had an average injury rate of 9.71, while businesses that survived more than five years had an average injury rate of 3.89 during their first year of business⁷.

OSHA echoed this, noting on the agency's website that "Employers often find that changes made to improve workplace safety and health can result in significant improvements to their organization's productivity and financial performance⁸."

While having a safety program in place is no guarantee that a company will be successful, not having one will likely be at least a sign that a company will be less successful in its day-to-day operations in the near and long term.

THE BENEFITS OF SPITZLIFT



SpitzLift cranes are manufactured in the USA

SpitzLift cranes are durable and are used all over the world in extreme environments by both the military and industrial customers.

SpitzLift cranes have a lifting capacity of up to 900 lbs.

SpitzLift cranes are compact, take up minimal cargo space, and are easily spec'd into vehicle applications.

SpitzLift cranes are manufactured out of aluminum, making them lightweight and safe to move by a single technician.

SpitzLift cranes are payload efficient. Total upfit adds less than 100 lbs. of payload to the vehicle.

THE 5 REASONS TO CONSIDER A LIGHTWEIGHT LIFTING SOLUTION

1. Do you see a trend in reported on-the-job injuries related to lifting?
2. Are your employees consistently lifting equipment that weighs over 50 pounds and/or twisting when lifting?
3. Are you providing adequate tools for employees to safely lift materials over 50 pounds?
4. Do you need to more effectively deploy manpower?
5. Do you need to increase productivity and profitability?



References

1. "The Cost of Worker's Comp Payment Is \$1 Billion per Week [Infographic]." Smith, Sandy. EHS Today. Feb. 14, 2013. <http://www.ehstoday.com/safety/cost-workers-comp-payments-1-billion-week-infographic>. Accessed Oct. 20, 2017.
2. "In the United States, Employee Turnover is On the Rise." Catalyst.org. August 12, 2016. <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/turnover-and-retention>. Accessed Oct. 9, 2017.
3. "7.1 The Costs of Turnover." Human Resource Management. 2011. <http://open.lib.umn.edu/humanresourcemanagement/chapter/7-1-the-costs-of-turnover>. Accessed Oct. 20, 2017.
4. "Overexertion Injuries Top Liberty Mutual's 2016 List." Occupational Health & Safety. Jan. 15, 2016. <https://ohsonline.com/articles/2016/01/15/overexertion-injuries-top-liberty-mutuals-list.aspx>. Accessed Oct. 20, 2017.
5. "Ergonomics eTool: Solutions for Electrical Contractors." United States Department of Labor. Occupational Safety & Health Administration. <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/electricalcontractors/materials/heavy.html>. Accessed Oct. 20, 2017.
6. "Ergonomics – Back Injury Prevention." University of Virginia. <http://ehs.virginia.edu/Ergonomics-BIP.html>. Accessed Oct. 20, 2017.
7. "Injury Rate as an Indicator of Business Success." Holizki, T.; Nelson, L.; McDonald, R. *Industrial Health*. Jan. 2006. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16610555>. Accessed Oct. 20, 2017.
8. "Business Case for Safety and Health." United States Department of Labor. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. <https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/products/topics/businesscase/costs.html>. Accessed Oct. 20, 2017.