

Back belts



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Introduction: The alarming number of recordable back injuries reported at a manufacturing unit has forced its management to seriously review and adopt immediate measures to eliminate or minimize the recurrence of such incidents to improve their labour utilization plan. An employee reported ill, will cause the company sick leave wages and in prolonged cases, additional burden in order to hire and train up a replacement. This expenditure could be significant in case the number of incidents is on the increase as happened here. The cause of back injury has not been attributed to any specific wrong doing by a worker. One of the main possibilities can be assumed to be lack of proper safety method such as wearing a back belt or any such support. Manufacturer's claim: ITA-MED Co, 310 Littlefield Ave, South San Francisco, CA 94080, USA, one of the A manufacturers of back belts and supports claims, their products will reduce pressure, strain and pain in the lower back in addition to help the users adopt easy posture when handling heavy loads and escape injuries. They assure products of higher quality, with more comfort, better look and longer durability based on unique, versatile designs. Their motto is " Stay healthy with Back Supports from ITA-MED" (Back and Abdominal Supports, 2009).

NIOSH Views: NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) is one of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) within the Dept of Health and Human Services. It was formed to bear the responsibility for conducting research and proposing improved measures to prevent injuries and illness related to work. DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 94-127. (Back Belts: Do They Prevent Injury?, 1994). In 1994, the NIOSH released a report called DHHS, 1994, a review of the published scientific literature. It states <https://assignbuster.com/back-belts/>

that NIOSH " does not recommend the use of back belts to prevent injuries among uninjured workers, and does not consider back belts to be personal protective equipment" According to NIOSH, lifting technique plays important role in the incidents of lifting injuries. The study reveals, the use of back belt as a protective wear, is a personal choice for the employer and employee and not a statutory safety requirement. Neither has it been proven that the use is in anyway harmful either except the possibility of attempting extra capacity lifting with a false belief that the back belt will offer the additional support. (NIOSH Publication and Product: Back Belts Do They Prevent Injury, n. d). Conclusion: Back support is of utmost importance for the entire human body and its proper maintenance no doubt is a pre-requisite to a healthy manpower resource of any organization. Fatigue or incorrect posture of back muscle can cause back pain or injury. The usage of a back belt in the recommended manner can sustain the long exertion of body muscles and reducing or preventing pain or discomfort if at all it starts or develops. There are various types of back belts to cater to the requirements of varied sections of the labour force, " some with suspenders or of different textures to offer adequate comfort level of the user" (The Advantages of Wearing Back Support Belts, n. d). " NIOSH in its summary of review and recommendations concludes from the research that belt use reduced spine bending in laboratory trials" (Summary of NIOSH Back Belt Studies, 2002). Though the use of back belts has not been scientifically proven to eliminate back injury directly, the very presence of back belts worn acts as a constant reminder to the user of the necessity to exert energy in a very safe and cautious manner by sticking to the stipulated working procedures and the underlying potential risk impending in absence of proper safety method. It

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should be supplemented with sufficient awareness of ergonomics. “

Ergonomics is a study based on scientific method to alleviate stress and injuries due to over exertion of muscles, wrong posture and repeat movements. The study accordingly plan and design the required work environment, tools and equipment to match the worker’s physical capabilities and limitations” (Workplace Safety and Health Topic: Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders, 2011). And training in body mechanics, proper lifting techniques, importance of stretching and exercise. “

Employees already affected with back ailments, pregnant employees shall obtain medical certification approving the usage of back belt. Back belts are not advisable for long-term or continuous use, but only for specific tasks and for short periods” (Safety Bulletin Index - Back Belts, 1995). With the introduction of back belt use supported with proper training on ergonomics and following statutory requirements, there is every possibility that the incidents of back injuries and consequent absenteeism can be averted or minimized to the desirable extent resulting in improved cost efficiency of the organization. Reference List Back Belts: Do They Prevent Injury?. (1994). CDC. Retrieved May 26, 2011, from <http://wonder.cdc.gov/wonder/prevguid/p0000423/p0000423.asp#head0010000000000000>

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