

Master Brewers Safety Toolbox Talk



Ergonomics and Employee Safety

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Overview

Ergonomics is an applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely. This is very important, especially when it comes to the health and safety of the individuals working in your brewery. In a brewery, individuals are constantly bending, twisting, and extending, often in unusual ways. This Toolbox Talk aims to highlight a few ways you can help your people stay healthy and safe as they work.

Back Injuries

Back injuries are one of the most common types of workplace injuries due to the amount of twisting, lifting, and reaching individuals do daily in a brewery. These movements, along with spending long hours on your feet, can compound over time, leading to potential lifelong effects.

Tools to Implement

Back Support

Whether on the packaging line, in the cellar, or staging grain for the next brew, a good back support is always a great piece of personal protective equipment to utilize. Adding extra support and stability can help individuals avoid workplace injuries that could otherwise have them on light duty or worse.



Taproom

Lifting and stacking kegs in a cold box can be hazardous to individuals executing the tasks. Implementing the use of a keg stacker and stacking rings can cut down on the



amount of lifting individuals need to do, while providing a stable base for kegs to sit on while they are stacked.

Warehouse and Production

Powered industrial trucks (forklifts) are essential to a brewery. Whether moving spent grain totes, stacking and moving pallets, or loading super sacks into the unloader, forklifts have a multitude of functions. Traditional sit-down style forklifts require the driver to twist and bend while operating in reverse. This alone can have major effects on the operator, due to the fact that forklifts are operated in reverse over 50% of the time.

Implementing the use of a stand-up style forklift can significantly cut down on the amount of manipulation an operator must do to utilize the forklift while moving and organizing large pallets of kegs or grain. This style of forklift also supports an operator's healthy posture, due to the orientation of the operator while using the forklift.



Packaging

Catching cases, building beer pallets, and keg cleaning and filling are just a few things an individual on a packaging team may do during a regular day. These all require individuals to be on their feet for long periods of time and constantly require them to bend and twist. Implementing the use of a pallet leveling table can alleviate most of the strain of stacking cases on pallets by maintaining a higher elevation for individuals to transfer full cases from table to pallet. This significantly cuts down on the need for individuals to bend or twist in unnatural ways and can cut down on other possible workplace injuries. When working with kegs, especially a high volume of them, it is important to use any tool at your disposal since handling full kegs can be dangerous due to their significant weight. Utilizing a vacuum lift, therefore, can pay unbelievable dividends in worker safety. This tool assists in keg handling and stacking—two tasks that generally require multiple individuals but that with the aid of a vacuum lift requires only one. This piece of equip-

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ment can not only reduce back strain, but it can also save on the time it takes to complete the tasks.

Equipment Procurement

Implementing use of some of these devices can come with a significant upfront investment. However, the cost of purchasing these types of devices can often be offset by occupation safety grants offered by most states. Take the time to find out if your state or city offers these types of grants. They will make an impact when it comes to obtaining equipment that can help keep your team safe at work.