

Fulfillment Centers

Ergonomics Priority for Prevention | May 2024



Businesses in risk class 2103 operate warehouses that store, select, pack and ship customer orders and use automated vehicles and robotics. Common tasks include loading and unloading trailers, unpacking cases, picking and packing orders, and sorting items for final delivery.

Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSDs)

Fulfillment centers have a compensable* WMSD rate that is more than 10 times the Washington statewide average for all industries.

WMSD Claim Rate per 1,000 FTEs



Common causes of WMSDs	Injury description examples
Repetitive placing, grasping, or moving objects	"Gripping 500 packages an hour"
Lifting boxes, crates, cartons	"Unloading 40+ pound boxes from truck"
Bending, climbing, crawling, reaching, or twisting	"Squatting to pull items out of lower bin"
Pushing or pulling cart, dolly, hand truck	"Pulling overweight pallets"

* Compensable claims involve wage replacement for lost work time (four or more days), total permanent disability, fatality, or a worker kept on salary by the employer during disability.

Top three occupations reporting WMSDs

1. Stock clerks and order fillers
2. Manual freight, stock, and material movers
3. Manual packers and packagers

Workers with more serious WMSDs received time loss benefits. Most of these workers needed 56+ days to recover before returning to work.

Ideas for preventing WMSDs

- Use ergonomics analysis tools to set a reasonable pace of work.
- Use height adjustable pallet lifts and carts to allow lifting at waist level.
- Use vacuum lifts for lifting cases when unloading and loading trailers, and when palletizing.
- Use powered pallet jacks to move heavy pallets.

For more information and to learn about requesting an ergonomics consultation, visit lni.wa.gov/Ergonomics. For questions, email Ergonomics@lni.wa.gov. For more information about the risk classification descriptions, visit apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=296-17A-2103.

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