



Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities

Australia and New Zealand

National campaign to reduce manual task injuries

10 November 2008

Workplace safety authorities across Australia are joining forces in an effort to reduce manual handling injuries in the retail, wholesale, transport and storage industries.

The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA) Chair, John Watson, said the national campaign aims to reduce injury rates that result from manual tasks such as loading and unloading vehicles.

“The national campaign will specifically look at the road freight industry and its interface with the supply chain, which contributes significantly to workers’ compensation claims for muscular stress injuries,” Mr Watson said.

“The campaign aims to build on preliminary studies undertaken by WorkSafe Victoria which indicate the industry believe that loading and unloading vehicles is a significant health and safety issue that needs to be addressed.

“Injuries from manual tasks and moving objects are quite significant in the retail, wholesale, transport and storage industries and impose a considerable financial burden on industry.

“By identifying why manual handling injuries in this industry are significant, employers can develop ways to reduce their incidence, and this can ultimately assist in reducing workers’ compensation claims costs to these businesses,” he said.

“During 2005-06 the national claims rate for road freight transport and road freight forwarding was 10.6 per 1,000 workers while muscular stress claims across the retail, wholesale, transport and storage industries were at a rate of 7.0 claims per 1,000 workers.

“The 18 month campaign will include surveying transport industry workers and employers in October and November 2008, to assist in developing appropriate and targeted information tools and products to help industry reduce manual handling injuries,” Mr Watson said.

An education program will be rolled out in early 2009 as part of the campaign and will include advisory workshops and site visits to businesses in the road freight industry to assist employers increase their capability to lower safety risks,” he said.

A series of workplace audits will follow the education campaign in late 2009 with the overall results of the campaign are expected to be released in the first quarter of 2010.

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