

Road Freight Industry

These are the most common injuries and hazards for people working in road freight, as shown by injury claims. The road freight industry includes short and long distance road freight transport and freight forwarding operations.

Psychological System

Work-related stress arising from bullying, fatigue, and limited ability to control workload.

Shoulder

Traumatic joint/muscle injury or strain while lifting and handling freight.

Back

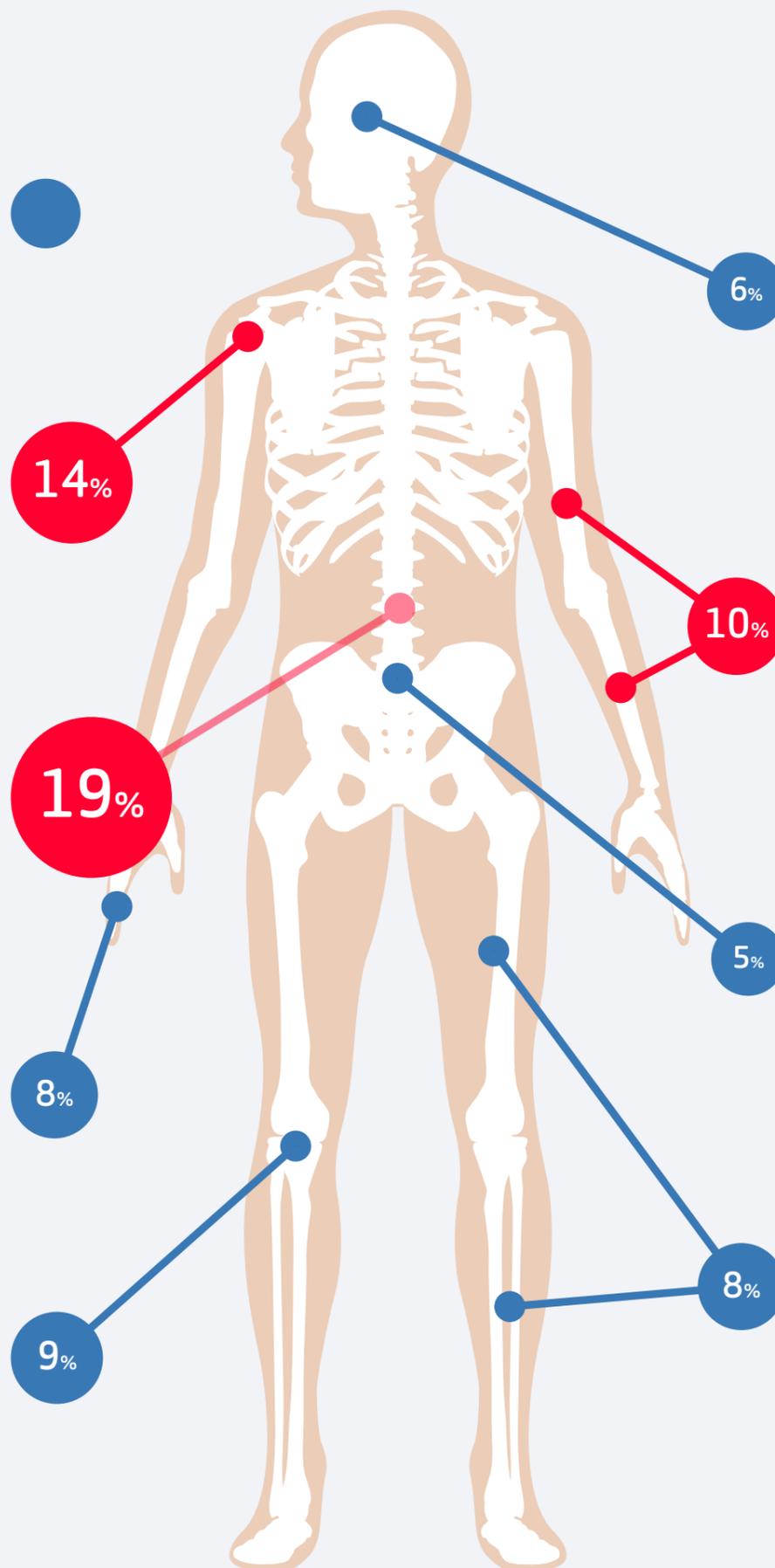
Muscle stress/strain from lifting and handling freight. Falls while loading/unloading truck or stepping out of truck cabin.

Hand/Fingers

Open wounds, lacerations or fractures from being crushed/caught while handling freight, or from freight falling on to hands.

Knee

Traumatic joint/muscle injury or strain to the knee due to falling or stepping down from truck, or tripping on uneven surfaces.



Face/Eye/Ear

Hearing loss from exposure to noise. Being hit in the head applying load restraint, or from falling freight or overhead objects.

Arm

Muscle stress/strain from repetitive lifting of freight. Fractures from falling or slipping, and falling on arm.

Abdomen

Hernia from lifting heavy freight while loading/unloading.

Leg

Traumatic joint/muscle injury or fracture from falling/slipping off truck, or tripping on uneven ground. Open wounds/laceration to the leg from vehicle accidents.

Safety solutions

WorkSafe expects employers to have safety solutions in place to protect workers from injury and illness.

Below are some common solutions known to reduce the risk of injury. Employers should work together with their employees to determine the most effective solutions for their workplace.

Hotspots

Solution

Falling loads

- Hand/Fingers
- Face/Eye/Ear

- Stabilise loads (e.g. by segmenting with cages, stillages, pallets and mezzanines, or link with skips or bins).
- Ensure packaging is sturdy and does not stick out or catch. Use powered tightening of load binders.
- Untie and unload at the same level to avoid working below the load.
- Use exclusion zones (e.g. at least three times the load fall distance away from freight).

Falls from the cabin, rear of vehicle or load

- Back
- Shoulder
- Arm
- Knee

- Ensure the design of vehicle, load and procedures eliminates the need to climb on top of the load or tray (e.g. containerise the load, use mechanical aids, and apply load restraints and tarps from ground level).
- When working at height, use appropriate equipment (e.g. gantries, drop-down work platforms or travel restraints to prevent falls).
- Use appropriate equipment when loading docks (e.g. retractable steps, harnesses or restraints when unloading).
- Ensure vehicle has well-lit cabin access (e.g. wide non-slip steps, down-facing light in bottom of driver's door when it opens) and employees use three points of contact when entering or exiting the cabin.

Handling freight

- Back
- Shoulder
- Arm
- Hand/Fingers
- Abdomen

- Provide appropriate mechanical aids and equipment (e.g. loading docks, tailgate lifters, walk-up boards or retractable steps to ensure safe access to the load, lifting arms, conveyors and forklifts for loading and unloading, trolleys and barrows to shift loads) and ensure they are used properly and maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
- Ensure loads are planned and suitably presented for handling by mechanical aids (e.g. pallets).
- Train employees in the selection and use of any mechanical equipment and aids and safe handling methods (e.g. work is done between shoulder and mid-thigh height and with the elbows close to the body, work upright where possible).
- Develop policies for how to safely handle freight (e.g. two or three people to assist drivers with loading/unloading).

Load adjustment

- Back
- Shoulder
- Hand/Fingers
- Face/Eye/Ear
- Abdomen

- Ensure vehicles have load binder systems that can be tightened from ground level.
- Avoid using over-centre lever style tensioners (dogs) to tie down a load.
- Use ratchet style binders as these require less force to get the suitable tension.
- Regularly check the condition of load restraints and replace when necessary.

Noise

● Face/Eye/Ear

- Ensure employees are not exposed to noise that exceeds the exposure standard.
- Arrange for a noise assessment if employees are exposed to excessive noise (e.g. workers have to raise their voices to communicate over a distance of one metre) and there is uncertainty as to whether employees exposure may have exceeded the noise exposure standard.
- Eliminate or minimise the source of noise (e.g. Insulate truck cabins from high sound levels, reduce vibration).
- Provide hearing equipment as required

Slips, trips and falls around the vehicle

- Back
- Shoulder
- Arm
- Knee
- Leg

- Ensure loading/unloading space is clean, dry, even and well-lit.
- Train employees on safe loading and unloading (e.g. park in a way that permits safe and easy access to the vehicle for loading, unloading or load adjustment).
- Ensure employees wear appropriate footwear (e.g. robust, non-slip).

Vehicle accidents

● Leg

- Ensure vehicles are regularly serviced, well-maintained and comply with manufacturer's standards, including accessories such as tailgate lifters and trolleys.
- Minimise in-cabin distractions (e.g. loud music) and vibration (e.g. uncomfortable seating).
- Ensure drivers are not impaired by drugs, alcohol or fatigue and discourage speeding, tailgating, etc.
- Provide GPS monitoring to ensure speed limits are not exceeded.

Work-related stress, fatigue, bullying and harassment

● Psychological System

- Encourage a positive workplace culture, including reporting of bullying and harassment.
- Ensure all employees understand what bullying and harassment is, and the procedures for reporting incidents (e.g. policies and procedures should be promoted during employee induction and workplace bullying prevention or training).
- Provide access and encourage employees to use employee counselling/support services, where possible.
- Develop strategies for managing the impact of fatigue (e.g. develop a fatigue management system and train managers/team leaders how to effectively implement it).
- Train employees how to recognise fatigue signs and symptoms.
- Encourage employees to report any workplace stress factors (e.g. work demand, low control, poor support, lack of role clarity, organisational culture) and control appropriately.

Visit www.injuryhotspots.com.au

WorkSafe Advisory Service Toll-free 1800 136 089

Your health and safety contact is:

You must consult with the people who will be affected by changes before any changes affecting their occupational safety or health are put in place. If someone is injured at work, their employer must ensure they receive proper care and support their safe return to work. WorkSafe Victoria is a trading name of the Victorian WorkCover Authority.