



**IMPACTO™**  
Protective Products Inc.

Spring 2004

Newsletter

## Hot Off The Press

Welcome to this issue of **IMPACTO ON SAFETY**. Spring, I keep being promised is coming. I suppose the one true way to know for sure is that our Trade Show schedule has hit us and is unbelievably hectic. We are participating in many shows, take a look and drop by when we are in your neighbourhood. We are elbow deep in new product development, updating product literature and staying on top of customer needs.

## Message From The Boss

A new spring and a new granddaughter makes everything look better. We are fortunate at IMPACTO to have sales in different countries to balance out the highs and lows in specific markets. It allows us to continue to support our business partners even in a recessionary business environment. Pressure on costs is a world wide phenomem and we are making personnel and operational changes to reduce our operating costs to allow our customers to stay with us. We will continue to offer new and improved products to create sales opportunities for us. I know we don't say thank you often enough and in this letter I would like all of you to know that all of us at Impacto appreciate your continuing support and encourage you to let us know how we can help.

## Farewell



**Tom Sebastian** has decided to move on. Tom has been selling IMPACTO Products since the late 1980's. First with Safeguard Technologies as our master distributor and then as V.P. Sales directly with IMPACTO. Tom's product knowledge and market insights in the Safety industry are legendary. Tom is a family first guy, loves good Italian food and knows where the best restaurants are. Tom spends his spare time working on his boat, and then fishing for the big ones.

We at IMPACTO would like to take this opportunity to say thank-you. So ..... "THANK -YOU, Tom". We wish you all the very best in your future endeavors.

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# Ergonomic Aids for Industrial Workers

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) made up approximately one-third of all lost workday cases in 2001. While office workers may receive the most attention in the popular press, the manufacturing and services industries had the highest numbers of MSDs in 2001. In addition, BLS reported that among frequent events or exposures, repetitive motion injuries resulted in the longest absences from work – about 18 days.

For those in the industrial field, a number of workplace applications can cause these disorders. Power tools used by construction workers – chainsaws, sanders, grinders and jackhammers, for example – can cause vibration injuries. The repeated heavy lifting involved in the retail and the material handling industries can cause lower back pain. While the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has not yet produced a single standard related to preventing ergonomic injuries, it has developed guidelines for specific industries such as nursing homes, poultry processing and grocery retailers. For industries that do not yet have guidelines, they should assess the potential ergonomic hazards in the workplace and develop a program to address them.

When developing an ergonomics program, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends [reducing or eliminating potentially hazardous conditions by using engineering controls](#) (i.e., using machines to transport materials); [changing work practices and management policies](#) (i.e., reducing length of shifts or rotating workers through jobs with different physical demands); and [using personal protective equipment](#).

It is the final recommendation of using Personal Protective Equipment that this article will explore.

## BACK SUPPORTS

A study published in 2002 in the International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health found that those who wear back supports had an average of 15% fewer acute back injuries than those given only lifting advice, and 26% fewer acute back injuries than those with neither lifting advice nor back support belts. The study was conducted among 12,700 home attendants in New York City. In choosing the correct back support, there are a number of qualities you may want to consider. First, take a look at the [number of stays](#), or supports, that line the back support belt. Generally, the more stays in a belt, the better the protection. They provide stability and support to the spine. Stays can be made from plastic or metals such as aluminum, but spring steel stays are the best at providing flexibility and strength. They conform to body shapes and spring back to their original form when not engaged, whereas some other materials may remain bent. Metal stays should have plastic coating on the ends to prevent them from poking through the pockets that keep them in place. In addition, look for stay pockets that feature a rubber lining that will grip clothing and prevent the back belt from sliding out of place. Many back belt supports are made with [shoulder straps](#) that help keep the belt in place when it is unfastened. They should be elastic and adjustable so that they do not hang loose on a worker. Break-away shoulder straps are an added safety feature for those who work near machinery, lowering the risk of entanglement in moving parts. Another feature to consider is the [material used to fasten the belt together](#). Be sure to choose a closure system that is secure and won't break apart under stress. Also key when choosing the right back support belt is [ensuring that it fits properly](#). Employees should be

measured at both the waist and the hip. Waist measurements should be made around the widest portion of the waist below the navel with the clothes on. Hip measurements should be made about 2" below the navel. Those two measurements will help you determine which size will best fit your employees. Good back supports should also have a [two-stage closure system](#). One closure secures the support around the waist and positions the stays while the second engages the side panels to form the stays to the back once the support is in position. Back supports should be worn loose and just below the navel.

"How long an employee should wear a back support may depend on the nature of his or her job," said Wilson. "If an employee will be lifting materials throughout the day, it might be a good idea to wear the back support continuously but in a relaxed position when lifting is not required. That way, you have it ready to be engaged at any time as opposed to taking it off and then forgetting to use it."

**Next Issue: WRIST SUPPORTS**

## Product Showcase



**Puncture Resistant Glove AL501-25**

- Fingerless style glove for full hand dexterity
- Abrasion resistant grain leather palm improves durability
- Stretchy Nylon Lycra back ensures a comfortable fit
- 6 layers of thin, flexible "Super fabric®" provide outstanding cut and superior puncture resistance

# Who Runs Greater Risk of Low Back Injury .....

Someone sitting at a computer all day or someone performing heavy manual labour?

It turns out each individual has the same high likelihood of hurting themselves. Mardy Frazer, a professor of ergonomics at the University of Waterloo, says people often have a hard time accepting that computer work can cause physical injury. One client was surprised when she discovered her desk job was responsible for neck pain so severe it woke her in the night. A new desk was too high for her old chair, forcing her to look up at the computer. An occupational therapist offered to watch her work. She advised the chair had to be high enough so that her eyes were roughly level with the top of the monitor. Buying a new chair and three visits to a physiotherapist, she is a new woman.

## Beware the laptop

The trouble with laptops is you can use them anywhere - and people do. Think about how many times you've been sitting on the couch, bending over your laptop.

## Tips for avoiding injury and strain

- Get a good chair. It should adjust for height and lumbar support, and have a five-star base to avoid tipping. The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) recommends adjusting the chair height so that your knees are level with your hips. If your feet are not resting flat on the floor, use a footrest. Alter your chair if there is a difference between the height of the keyboard and the writing surface.
- The CAOT also advises adjusting the lumbar support to the curve in your lower back. Not changing the lumbar support can cause stress in muscles and joints, and alter the normal "S" curve of the spine. If you don't have a chair with lumbar support, you can use a pillow or rolled up towel, provided the support is not too thick. There's no rule of thumb for thickness, but it should feel comfortable.
- Don't work hunched over or sitting on the edge of your chair.

- Let your upper arms hang down and put your lower arms straight out when typing or using the mouse.
- When typing, don't raise your wrists up or down. Keep them roughly parallel to the floor. The same holds true for the mouse.
- Make sure your mouse is close enough that you needn't lift your arm to use it.
- Put your monitor straight in front of you, making sure your eyes are level to the top of the screen.
- Take breaks from the computer at least once an hour. Standing up while talking on the phone will give your spine a chance to return to its normal posture.
- If you do use a laptop, use a separate mouse and keyboard to minimize problematic posture. Set your laptop on a surface that allows your eyes to be level with the top of the screen. Put the keyboard and mouse at a level that allows you to keep your arms at a 90° degree angle.

## Tradeshows



Drop by we would like to see you. Our booth numbers are listed below.

### IAPA - Toronto

Apr 26-28, 04 - Toronto, ON #1522

### PPHSA - Toronto

May 4-6, 04 - Toronto, On # 7

### Safety & Health

May 11-13, 04 - Birmingham, U.K. # H51

### ASSE

Jun 7-9, 04 - Las Vegas, NV # 1134

### VPPPA

Aug 30 - Sept 1, 04 - Las Vegas, NV #228

### National Safety Conference

Sept. 13 - 15, 04 - New Orleans #3329

### MINExpo 2004

Sept. 27 - 30, 04 - Las Vegas, NV # 1749

## Welcome

IMPACTO would like to welcome **United Sales Associates (USA)** as our new Manufacturers' Representative in the North East. Their territory will include Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Upstate New York and Western Pennsylvania.

Founded in 1982 and headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio Inside and outside sales force of twenty is complemented by a support staff of ten. -- With over 200 years combined experience in Industrial Safety Sales. Their mission is "to provide maximum economic value added within the distribution channel."

USA will be showing IMPACTO Products at the following regional tradeshows:

- Hoosier Safety Council
- Governor's Safety & Health Conf.
- Michigan Safety Conference
- Western New York Safety Conference
- Ohio Safety Congress & Exhibit
- Great Lakes Industrial Show
- Western Pennsylvania Safety Council
- Tennessee Safety Congress
- West Virginia Safety Conference

## HAVS Conference

The 10th Annual Hand-Arm Vibration Conference will be held in Las Vegas, NV on June 7 - 11, 2004. It is an international forum held triennial to publicly present and discuss the results of current research addressing medical, epidemiological, engineering and legal aspects of HAVS.

Since 1972 the conferences have significantly contributed to public awareness, and the development of international standards and ergonomic and engineering strategies to help reduce the number of cases of HAVS in worker population. IMPACTO has been involved with these conferences for the past 12 years and we are proud to be assisting as sponsors for this event. We will report on the highlights in future newsletters.

# OSHA Standard 29

OSHA utilizes standards established by a variety of governmental agencies including:

- ANSI, the American National Standards Institute
- NIOSH, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

OSHA standard 29 CFR Part 1910 sets the standard for Personal Protective Equipment or PPE. Subpart I of the standard establishes criteria that requires employers to provide hand protection to employees if required while on the job. The standard states:

a) General Requirements: Employers shall select and require employees to use appropriate hand protection when employees' hands are exposed to hazards such as those from:

- skin absorption of harmful substances;
- severe cuts or lacerations;
- severe abrasions
- punctures;
- chemical burns;
- thermal burns; and
- harmful temperature extremes

b) Selection: Employers shall base selection of the appropriate hand protection on an evaluation of the performance characteristics of the hand protection relative to the task(s) to be performed, conditions present, and the hazards and potential hazards identified.

The purpose of this provision is to assure that employees are using the appropriate type of gloves for the tasks to be performed. For example, foundry workers generally must wear gloves that provide thermal protection, while meat cutters must wear gloves that protect against cuts. While the selection of the appropriate type of glove for a certain task or hazard may seem to be obvious, OSHA's rulemaking record indicates that many hand injuries have occurred because the wrong type of glove was used for a certain task.

## Hazard Assessment

It is vitally important to properly assess the hazards of the task or job. The principles of proper hazard assessment are:

1. Identify the hazards in the workplace,
2. Attempt to engineer the hazards out of the task or job,
3. Evaluate the proper PPE to be used by the employee, and
4. Train the employee in the proper use and care of PPE.

## Hand Protection Performance Levels

Differing standards of performance are often indicated by the statement of numbers, typically within the range 0 - 5. The lower the number, the lower the performance level.

Example: A glove for general use may show the following levels of performance.

Abrasion resistance 2  
Blade cut resistance 1  
Tear resistance 3  
Puncture resistance 2

This would be shown on the product as follows:

CE Approvals  
2 1 3 2



IMPACTO products carry this marking.

## Literature Update

Updating literature seems to be a never ending job. Introducing new IMPACTO products into the market is very important to us.

The **Body Protection** catalogs are available. They now include a section for knee pad and insoles.

We have reprinted the **Hand and Wrist** to include the carpal tunnel gloves. The **Slash/Heat Protection** catalogue will be available soon. To receive copies, contact our office.

## Contact Us

Don't Forget! If you have an interesting story that you would like to share please contact Barbara or Nelsa at (888) 232-0031 or you can E-mail your story to [bgoodine@2protect.com](mailto:bgoodine@2protect.com) or [tinoco@2protect.com](mailto:tinoco@2protect.com)

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