

Greater Sudbury Paramedic Service Back Care Program



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MSD Prevention in the Paramedic Sector
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Back Injury in Paramedics



- B.C WorkSafe Statistics published in 2012 demonstrated those working in health and medicine had the highest rate of back strain injury at 33% of reported injuries in the workplace
- U.S Stats: Maquire BJ, Smith S *Prehosp Disaster Med* 2013
Paramedics/EMTs have 3x national rate of injury for all occupations. Of 21,749 reported cases – 14,470 (67%) for sprains, strains with back injury reported in 9,290 cases (43%)

Many paramedics are unable to work to full retirement age due to injury



Service Review

- 2013 to 2015 30% of Paramedic injury claims were attributed to lifting stretchers
- Each call results in Approx. 8 lifts
- In 2013, average pt. weight was 80 kgs. (176.3 lbs)
- Total combined weight (pt., stretcher, medical equip.) carried on a call 174.5 kgs (385 lbs)



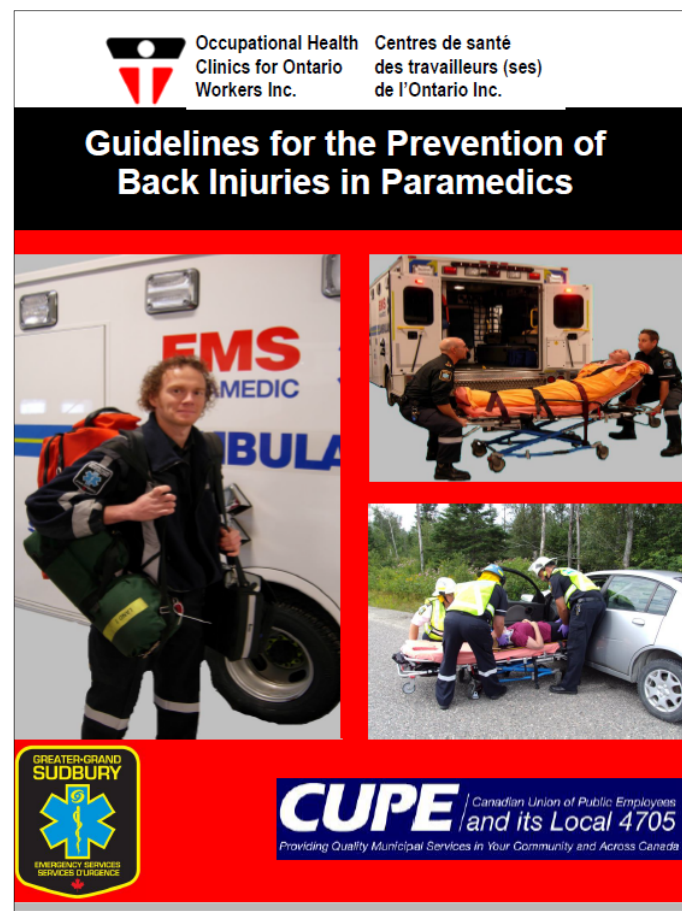
Back Program Overview

- Free membership to City owned wellness facilities to encourage fitness
- Partnership with OHCOW and the CUPE 4705 to develop Guidelines as a foundation
- Body mechanics and practical training for all front line paramedics with kinesiologists
- Involvement with Paramedic Advisory Committee on equipment/power stretcher evaluation and selection process
- Injury stat review and analysis



Guidelines for the Prevention of Back Injuries in Paramedics

- 2008 attended MSD workshop in Sudbury
- Determined requirement for a tool for paramedics
- Developed working group
- Collaborative approach with City, CUPE and its local 4705 , and Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW)
- Completed project in 2013



OHCOW Guidelines



- Multimedia self-study package
- Basic foundation of a “back care program”
- Available in French or English
- Program is personalized for each service, access the “knowledge transfer” crossword demonstrates program completion
- Contact OHCOW to access the program

Ergonomist: Trevor Schell

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Additional back exercises:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0XTsgTdb4c>



Training

- January 2014: Online OHCOW program
- 2014: Overview of safe lifting practice: Body mechanics training, muscle recruitment, communication
- 2014-2015: Practical with backboard, stairchair & stretcher
- 2015: Diet, exercise & pitfalls of shiftwork
- Reviewed safe carry methods for equipment bags
- Ergonomic assessment of desk work stations, purchase of ergonomic chairs



Prevention Steps

- Multifaceted approach: didactics, practical review, equipment change, encourage personal fitness and wellness
- Reviewed and trialed equipment options with *Paramedic Advisory Committee*
- Prepared business case for presentation to Counsel to enable system wide power stretcher/load assist purchase

With paramedic back injuries increasing, city to buy power stretchers

"The overall percentage of stretcher handling injuries (patient and equipment lifting) continues to trend up, and has increased by 14 per cent over the past six years," Nicholls said.

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Jul 13, 2014 8:22 PM by: Darren MacDonald



In 2013, there were 89 injuries to paramedic staff in Sudbury, translating into 3,339 lost work hours. A total of 42 per cent of those injuries were related to lifting stretchers. File photo.



Field Trials



MODEL 59-T

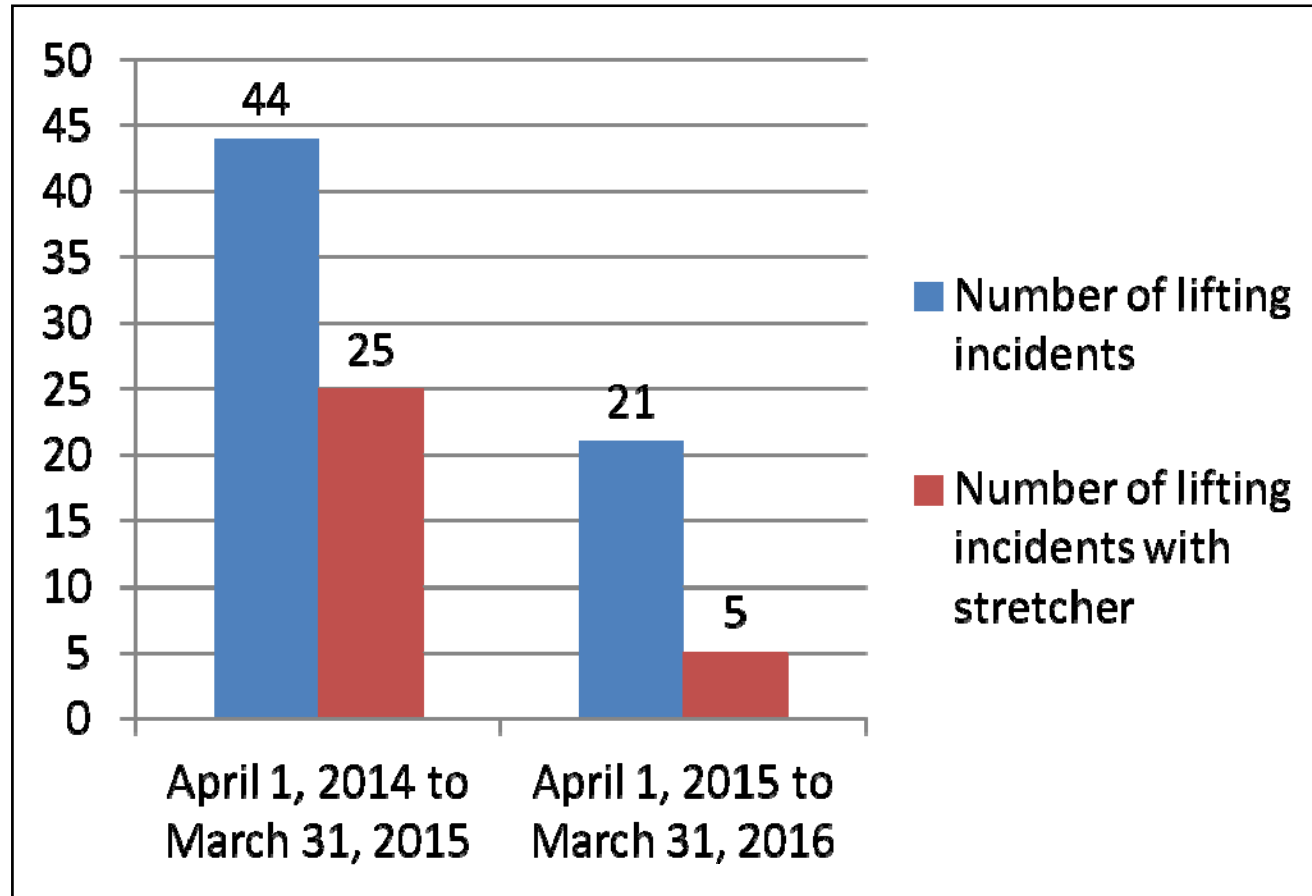


Lessons Learned

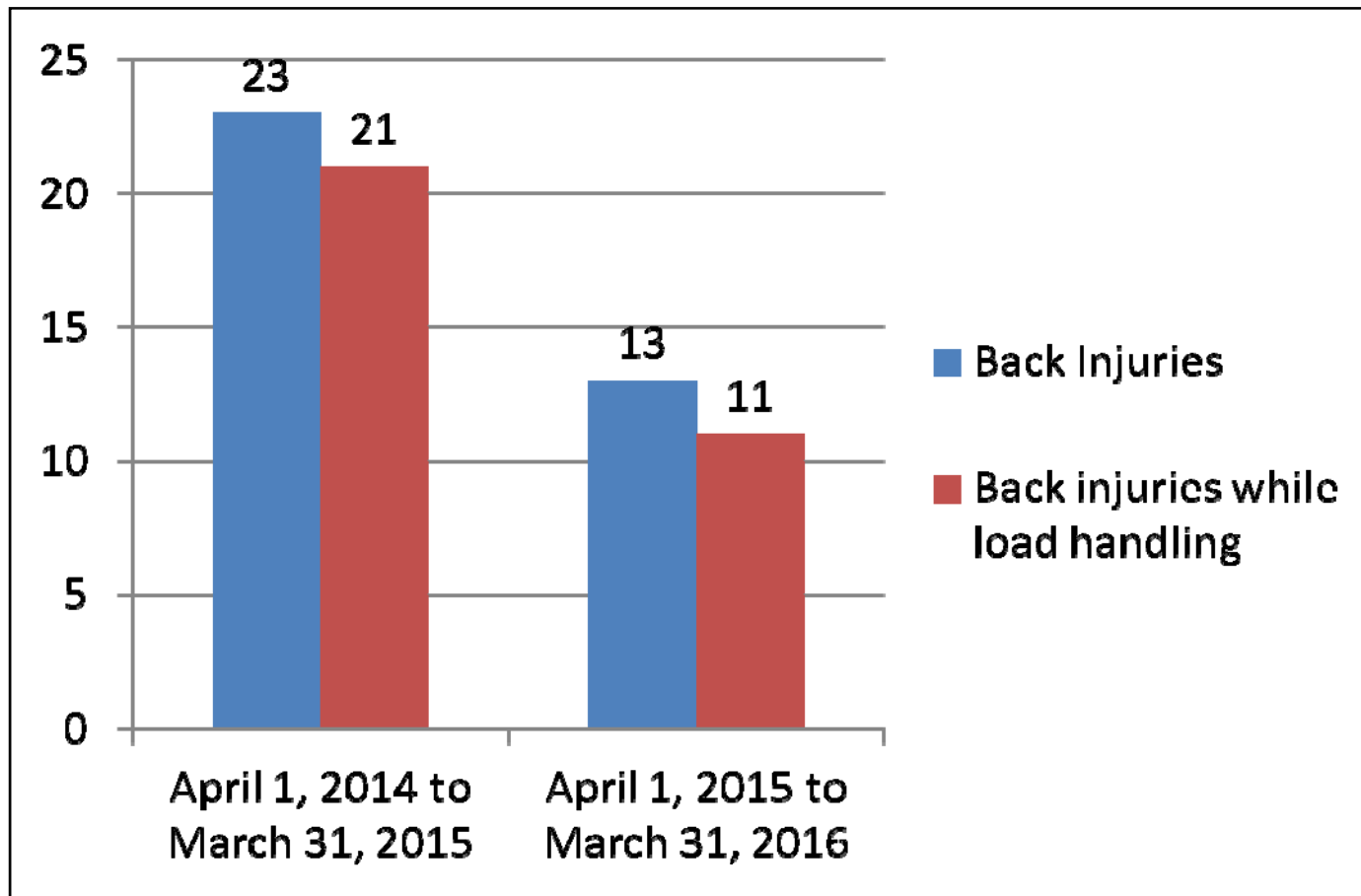
- Importance of teamwork
- Not all methods work as originally planned
- Trial and field review of new equipment to determine if it “works” well in your environment
- General health and wellness can impact risk of injury
- Always room for improvement – new technology, equipment



Injury Stats Results



Back Injuries



Next Steps

- Continue to train on proper lifting techniques
- Promote physical fitness and proper nutrition
- Evaluate - Power Stair Chair to further reduce exposure to repetitive lifting



Questions - Thank you

