



Courier Drivers: Handling Packages

A courier driver was delivering packages to a customer. The cargo space was full of packages. The driver bent down to pick up the large heavy box on the floor. While returning to a standing position, the driver felt a shooting pain down his leg. The driver had to go through extensive physical therapy for his back and was off work for two weeks. The worker's compensation claim was \$48,000.



Recommended Practices

For the Driver:

- 1) Store heavier packages off the floor and ideally between knee and shoulder height and lift packages one at a time.
- 2) Follow good lifting techniques – refer to “Lifting Safety” brochure by THSAO.
<http://www.thsao.on.ca/>
- 3) Use a cart whenever possible for heavier packages. Pushing is easier on the back, arms, and hands than carrying packages long distances
- 4) Load courier trucks so as to prevent double handling of packages. If another person loads your truck, provide a load chart to indicate package locations based on postal code.
- 5) Wear good footwear that is appropriate for the weather conditions.

For the Employer:

- 1) Purchase adjustable shelves for the courier truck to enable packages to be loaded within optimal height; from the knuckle/knee to shoulder height.
- 2) Print labels with larger fonts, especially weight and postal code information. This reduces awkward postures such as bending to read the labels, double handling or testing the weight of the packages.
- 3) Keep all doors well-lubricated and maintained.
- 4) Consider remote locking doors to allow safer entry and exit when holding boxes
- 5) Train drivers on lifting techniques and loading strategies.
- 6) Purchase light-weight carts for drivers to use when delivering packages (ideally less than 10kg).
- 7) Train drivers on easy ways to load and unload the cart into the trucks.

