

# TRUCK TALK

A Publication of  
Continental Western Group®



OCTOBER 2008

## Injury Prevention for Drivers

Did you know that professional truck drivers have more injuries that keep them off the job than workers in any other industry? While you might think the majority of these injuries result from traffic accidents, the truth is that the majority are sprains, strains, and other injuries that happen during the performance of non-driving parts of your job. Lost-time injuries most often result from over-exertion (28%), contact with objects and equipment (17.5%), and falls on the same level (11.5%). These three causes (57%) far out-number the injuries resulting from traffic accidents (13.5%).

Therefore, you need to be aware of everyday situations and activities that put you at risk for an injury. The following activities (and tips on doing them correctly) are associated with the job of a Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver, and you face them every day:

- Getting in and out of the truck. ALWAYS have 3 points of contact. Never jump down! Wear appropriate footwear, choose stable handholds, and pay attention to what you are doing.
- Driving. Adjust your seat so you can reach the steering wheel without having to stretch, and you can comfortably reach the floor pedals and shifter. Keeping your hands at 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock let the larger muscles of your upper arms and shoulders do most of the work. Stretching after exiting the cab and before beginning another activity helps to loosen tightened muscles.

- Loading and unloading trailers is an activity that has multiple opportunities for injury. The proper use of personal protective equipment is very important to preventing injuries during this activity. Leather gloves, steel-toed shoes, safety glasses, a hard hat, and high-visibility clothing are all good steps to take to avoid injury. Also be aware of pinch and crush points, especially when securing cargo to the trailer. Shifting cargo has been the cause of many severe injuries. Remember, gravity will win every time.
- Getting in and out (or on and off) a trailer. Never, never, never jump to the ground! Saving a couple of seconds just is not worth it.

Back injuries from over-exertion or incorrect lifting techniques are a major cause of injuries for truck drivers. Getting help from another person and using appropriate materials-handling equipment are two seemingly simple solutions to lifting tasks that are apparently overlooked time-after-time. Again, saving a few minutes now is not worth the consequences.

Your profession as a commercial motor vehicle driver puts you at risk of injury each and every day. The non-driving hazards listed above are but a few of the challenges you face; how you deal with them is a personal choice you have to make. Make the right choice.

