

# Protecting Retail Workers While Handling Merchandise



The holiday season is a particularly busy time for retail stores and their workers. So with the pressure on to keep shelves stocked, the risk of workers getting hurt may be higher, especially when manually handling materials.

NIOSH has published a guide of ergonomic solutions for retailers that, although it's geared toward grocery stores, has valuable advice and tips for other retail workplaces'and any workplace, in fact, in which workers are exposed to manual materials handling risks.

The illustrated guide covers many types of materials handling activities, including:

- Unloading pallets from a trailer with a powered-pallet jack;
- Placing products on conveyor for transport to the store;
- Removing boxes from conveyor to a handcart or onto a U-Boat;
- Unloading pallet onto handcart for transport to sales floor;
- Moving excess merchandise from a flat cart to storage rack;
- Using a pallet stacker to move a loaded pallet to storage rack or to move excess merchandise to storage rack;
- Using a vacuum lift to load or unload bags of material from a pallet;
- Using a pallet jack to move boxes from back room to sales floor; and
- Using a stocking cart to place products on shelves.

For more information on protecting workers from ergonomics-related injuries while handling materials manually, take these 5 steps and use this manual handling risk assessment worksheet.

Retail stores should also take steps to protect workers from being trampled or otherwise injured by crazed mobs of shoppers.