

Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSDs) are caused by using high force, repetitive movements, awkward postures, or too much vibration on the job.

WMSDs can be painful, debilitating, and lead to lost work time. In Washington, 40% of compensable workers' compensation claims are for WMSDs.

Retail Trade WMSD claim rates are declining.



Retail Trade is similar to the average of all other industries.

WMSD claims in Retail Trade were commonly caused by **Overexertion** in:

WMSD claims in Retail Trade are costly, these claims:

- Had a median claim cost of over \$10,000 per claim.
- Resulted in a median of 50 days of time loss per claim.

Retail Trade subsectors with the highest WMSD claim rates:

1. Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores
2. Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers
3. Food and Beverage Stores
4. General Merchandise Stores
5. Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers

33% **Lifting**

7% **Pulling and pushing objects**

7% **Holding, carrying, turning, or wielding objects**

Over half of claims involved:

- Low back (28%)
- Shoulders (17%)
- Hand/wrist (13.5%)

Overexertion injuries result from excessive physical effort directed at an outside source.

WMSDs usually develop over time. The intensity of a task, how long it takes, and how often it is done are important factors to consider when protecting workers from WMSDs. Employers should:

- Reduce heavy manual material handling when possible. For example, provide a cart or dolly for workers to use when handling heavy objects. Train workers how to use all equipment safely.
- Store it off the floor. The heaviest items to be lifted should be stored at mid-thigh to mid-chest height.
- Keep it close and don't twist when lifting or moving objects by hand. Make sure workers always have a secure grip, keep objects close to the body, have feet pointed in the same direction as the lift, and avoid twisting while lifting.
- Encourage workers to report any tasks that cause pain or discomfort right away.
- Have an ergonomist or safety and health specialist evaluate demanding tasks. *L&I offers free consultations.*

• Data source: Washington State Department of Labor & Industries workers' compensation data, 2005–2018; compensable State Fund claims included. Compensable claims involve wage replacement for lost work time (four or more days), total permanent disability, fatality, or a worker kept on salary by the employer during disability.
 • Claim costs presented here are underestimates, costs and days are calculated based on what was paid as of October 2019 and are only available for State Fund claims. Costs include medical costs and wage replacement.
 • FTE= full time equivalent employee. 1 FTE=2,000 hours worked in a year.