

December 2022

Hello RETRO Members,

Happy December! This month is the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's [Stop Impaired Driving Month](#). Impaired driving refers to operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.



The latest driving statistics for Washington State:

- 33% of all [fatalities involved alcohol](#) (2019)
- 21% were [THC positive fatalities](#) (2017)

Drugs and alcohol affect the brain's ability to function and impairment can continue many hours after using these substances because it takes a significant amount of time for the human body to process them.

Drug and alcohol impairments will affect the safety of employees as well as their coworkers. Impaired employees find it difficult to maintain customer relationships, work output, and can hamper company morale.

It is important to review and update workplace policies to be current regarding the abuse of alcohol and substances.

Click the following related website links are recommended:

- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)
- [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)
- [RS SafetyTV](#)
- [Safety Meeting opening video](#)

Poor and awkward posture could hurt - When performing work activities that deviate significantly from the body's "neutral" position, muscles operate less efficiently, and more force is expended to complete tasks. These awkward postural positions are common sources of injury, pain, discomfort, and lost productivity.

Awkward posture can include but are not limited to twisting the head to either side, bending the neck down, and often happen while reaching for, pulling, or lifting objects.



Prevent awkward postures by:

- Keeping often used materials within reach
- Maintaining neutral postures whenever possible
- Avoiding twisting and bending motions
- Using both hands to lift or complete tasks
- Changing positions or tasks frequently
- Taking breaks to walk or stretch

There is a [handout](#) from L&I on the ergonomic principles for reducing awkward postures.

Pallet jack safety tips - Pallet jacks are commonly used for moving merchandise but using them smartly could make a big difference in safety and productivity.

Pushing a pallet jack is safer and more effective than pulling because:

- Pushing enables a person to have better control to steer and maneuver the load and the ability to stop quickly.
- It could mean moving four-times more weight than pulling.
- It can be difficult to swiftly stop a load being pulled on a pallet jack, increasing the risk of collision between load and worker.
- Pulling a pallet jack puts the body into an unnatural position, which can lead to lower back issues.



Commented [RG1]: @Chris Silver I would like to see you practice using bullet points more often. Here is another opportunity.



Several helpful resources on pallet jack safety:

- [How to Prevent Pallet Jacks from Causing Injury](#)
- [Pallet Jack Rules](#) (employee/supervisor sign off)
- [RS Safety TV](#)

Commented [RG2]: @Chris Silver instead of linking to a word doc, it's better to link to the WR article link. I'm sure you can find it.

Commented [CS3R2]: I've branded the document with the RS logo and uploaded it as a PDF, since it isn't the same as any WR article.

Let us know if you need additional materials for your safety meetings.

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable holiday season!

Rick Means

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