ShopCare proudly acknowledges

CASE STUDY

Foodstuffs South Island Stability of palletised product

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CASE STUDY – FOODSTUFFS SOUTH ISLAND
STABILITY OF PALLETISED PRODUCT

THE CHALLENGE

The lack of optimal pallet stability meant potential employee injuries and damage to products, plant, and equipment. This hazard presents a daily safety risk for supply chain, and damaged product is a prime cause of loss in warehousing and manufacturing for businesses across the country

Approximately 30,000 pallets of product are delivered each week into Foodstuffs South Island Christchurch distribution centre. The challenge was to understand the contributing factors of increased incident reporting of product damage and near misses within the distribution centre through a comprehensive corrective action plan

OUR APPROACH

Incident investigations on how product was damaged identified several contributing factors during the transfer process, including the speed of material handling equipment (forklifts), product packaging, load placement, and forklift tine surfaces.

A team including health and safety representatives, suppliers, supervisors, and management worked together to understand how the four key factors contributed and find solutions.

1. Material Handling Equipment (MHE)

Speed was a factor when transferring frozen product within the distribution centre. We reached out to industry groups and MHE service providers to better understand industry speed limits. We then collaborated with Crown Forklifts and decided to reduce both the horizontal and vertical speeds of our MHE.

2. Pallet Wrapping

Pallets received from suppliers were not always wrapped correctly. This could create a sideways shift of product on the pallet when transferred by forklift. We worked with our suppliers to remind them of our pallet wrapping expectations and distribution teams to monitor and report any potential hazards from ineffective wrapping.

3. Loads not centred on tines

Behavioural safety audits were conducted as incident reports showed a trend of loads not centred on tines. Toolbox meetings and 'Focus Weeks' were effective ways to engage with the operations teams by sharing the trends and listening to their concerns and ideas. We also reviewed induction and refresher training for forklift operators.

4. Slippery Forklift Tines

To minimise the risks of forklift loads slipping off tines, we worked with our MHE supplier and chose a product with an anti-slip surface to minimise slippage in the event of fast movement, a sudden stop, and wet surfaces.

It has proved to be a simple and cost-effective health and safety solution for our supply chain.

BARRIERS

Initially, there was some resistance from the operations team as they viewed the dislodging of the frozen product as 'par for the course'. We had to articulate 'Why' we were making changes and 'How' it would benefit them by saving time and a safer workplace.

THE IMPACT

There was a significant reduction in near misses that could cause harm to the team. Product damage reduced by 30% which meant less disruption to the operation.