



Manual handling solutions for the vegetable industry No. 8



Lifting and moving boxes or crates of vegetables in the packing shed

What is the activity?

Manually lifting and/or pushing individual boxes or crates of vegetables from one location to another in a packing shed.

What are the risks?

Lifting, moving or pushing boxes or crates of vegetables from one place to another often requires awkward postures, i.e. forward bending, twisting and reaching; increasing the risk of musculoskeletal injuries of the shoulder and lower back. Work can be repetitive and high-paced over a whole shift and may involve high forces due to friction when pushing.

Injuries can occur suddenly if the produce is heavy and posture is awkward, or over a longer period of time through wear and tear.

What is the solution?

The risk of musculoskeletal injuries can be reduced by utilising conveyors to move boxes or crates of vegetables from one location to another in and around the packing shed.

Depending on the layout of the shed and the product being packed and moved, a simple gravity conveyor or a more sophisticated powered conveyor can replace the need for workers to lift, carry and push boxes and crates especially over significant distance.

Where there is an assortment of product lines, simple gravity or powered conveyors can provide the flexibility to achieve efficient movement of products with minimal manual handling risk and with reduced worker fatigue.

As well as reducing the need for workers to manually handle boxes and crates, conveyor systems can be designed to maximise the use of space available in the shed.

Conveyors can be fixed or portable and may be adjustable in length. Rotating tables are one form of conveyor for the temporary storage of work in progress.

Conveyor height, width and structure should be considered where workers are required to inspect or handle products on the conveyor.

The conveyor should:

- Reduce the need for workers to reach and bend forward by having a production line width of less than 400mm; and
- Provide space for the operator's feet under the production line (for standing work)

The production line height should be set so that the vegetables or task are at about 950mm, e.g. just below elbow height.



Systems of work

Where space or layout prohibits the use of conveyors; trolleys may be considered.

The layout of the packing shed and work areas should be designed so that workers are separated from forklift traffic and can do their tasks without bumping into one another.

Further Information

*Health and Safety Solution No. 6
Inspecting, sorting and grading vegetables
at production lines.*

The activity



A solution

