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Welcome to the Brainstorm Ergonomic Solutions Tool (BEST)

WHAT IS BEST?

BEST is a brainstorming tool for coming up with ideas to make lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling safer. The tool uses a series of questions to guide you and your employees in identifying creative solutions.

USING BEST

Getting Started: Choose a task to problem solve.

You will need to pick a lifting, carrying, or pushing and pulling task to work on before using the tool. For many jobs, lifting and carrying tasks can be looked at together.

You can find manual material handling problems to work on by:

- Walking through your workplace to look for employees moving objects by hand
- Talking to workers and supervisors about how they move objects from place to place
- Reviewing injury records for injuries caused by lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling

Building Your Team: Put together a small team of people that do the task.

Diverse groups tend to come up with more and better solutions, so bring in a variety of people. You can also add 1-2 people that don't work in the area. Those unfamiliar with the work can see tasks with a fresh viewpoint, which might create surprising solutions.

Individual Brainstorming First: Team members' brainstorm on their own.

Individual brainstorming tends to produce a wider range of ideas than going directly to group brainstorming. So start with each person answering the BEST tool questions by

themselves. Each person can write their ideas on the note taking sheets in the BEST Resources section or on sticky notes.

The goal is to write down as many ideas as they can. This is not the time to second guess if an idea will work or not.

Team Brainstorming Time: Bring the team together to share their ideas.

Team brainstorming is an effective way to build on, or combine, ideas to create the most effective solutions.

One way to get started is to place everyone's ideas on a white board or flip chart, grouping like ideas together. Next the team discusses how these ideas might be used to solve the problem.

When brainstorming, team members are encouraged to:

- Respectfully and freely share their thoughts on the ideas
- Add new ideas to the mix if the discussion brings them to mind
- Offer ways to make ideas better – there are no bad ideas, just ideas that need more work
- Avoid saying "it can't be done that way", instead ask "what would it look like if we tried it?"

As the brainstorming session progresses, the team will create a list of solutions they think will work best.

Choosing the Best Ideas to Put in Place: Pick quick and effective solutions.

Hopefully, the team has come up with a lot of great ideas and needs some help picking which solutions to work on first. A quick and easy way to decide what ideas to put in place is to answer three questions:

- Can the solution be quickly put in place?
- Does the solution greatly reduce the likelihood of injury?
- Can employees easily use the solution?

Ideas with the most "yes" answers should be tried first.

Another way to pick the ideas to work on first is to use the "Choosing the best ideas to put in place" method found in the BEST Resources section.

Putting Solutions in Place: Create a simple action plan.

Planning helps make sure a solution will be successful. A plan should identify who is responsible for each solution, assign completion dates and track progress. You can use the template below to create a plan or come up with one of your own.

Solution Tracking Worksheet Template

Task	Problem	Solution	Person Responsible	Target Date	Completed

Remember to train your employees on any changes made to processes, workspaces, equipment and tools.

Finally, look at other work areas to see if the fix can be used elsewhere.

Seeing if the Solution Worked: Check for success.

After a solution has been in place for a while you will want to check that it is being used correctly, has fixed the problem, and did not create other hazards.

One way to check if a solution was successful is to ask workers:

1. Did the solution make the work safer and easier to do?
2. Did the changes create any new problems?

As you look at your solutions, keep in mind that sometimes success takes more than one try. Don't be discouraged if your first solution needs some tweaks to be fully successful.