

AGREEMENT BETWEEN PARCELFORCE WORLDWIDE AND THE CWU IN REGARD TO THE USE OF THE BACKTRACK DEVICE

The Table of Success process has established a structure that strengthens the partnership approach and involves the CWU in the widest set of business issues. This approach and the utilisation of Joint Working Groups are designed to support the commitment to integrate the interests of all parties and compliment the mutual interest culture.

Introduction

According to the HSE, back injuries are the leading cause of accident related absences from the workplace and affect almost everyone at some point in their lives. In addition once a back has been damaged there is a tendency for further discomfort and problems in the future.

Manual handling injuries in Parcelforce are the most frequently occurring type and research suggests that they account for approximately one quarter of all injuries and one third of lost time injuries. Manual handling injuries can result in long term debilitating musculoskeletal problems for our people potentially affecting the rest of their lives.

Parcelforce and the CWU have already implemented a good manual handling training programme by Pristine Condition which engages managers, CWU representatives and Depot Trainers in active monitoring and the coaching of techniques using the TRACA activity. However, this activity is limited to techniques that are observed on site and it is considered by both parties that it would be of great mutual benefit to also understand and respond to our colleagues' exposure to these hazards when undertaking their duties off site.

'Backtrack' is an ergonomic posture monitoring device used by many companies, which was developed to help both in the prevention of injury and in the rehabilitation of those who have already suffered trauma in relation to their backs, which has been identified by Parcelforce as having the potential to help change damaging behaviours, particularly in relation to transient workers.

The 'Backtrack' device is a small postural monitoring data collection device which is worn on the user's hip, i.e. fitted to a belt around the waist that records the persons' movements during the working day. The device has a "vibration" function which alerts the user when their handling technique is poor, i.e. incorrect lifting of items or jumping down to exit a vehicle and any such alerts are recorded by the device.

The recorded data in relation to the "vibration" activations is downloaded at the end of each shift by connecting to a laptop and provides an overview of how often undue stress is being put on the persons back, which provides them with the opportunity to carry out remedial action at an early stage.

A trial of the "Backtrack" device has already taken place which has provided substantial anecdotal and observational evidence to suggest that the device could provide a mutual benefit for all in Parcelforce, if used correctly and in the right spirit.

PFW and the CWU have agreed that maintaining a progressive approach to the safety and care of employees is a tangible example of our Table of Success culture. The overall

objective is to make workplaces healthier and safer, improve performance and raise safety standards through trust, respect, co-operation and joint problem solving.

Agreed Principles for Use of 'Backtrack' Device

Both Parcelforce and the CWU recognise that the advance in the capability of technology in respect of data tracking has transformed the transparency of our actions in everyday working life. This provides exciting opportunities for innovations in many aspects of working life and the success of Parcelforce and its employees, but it also raises genuine concerns for employees in respect of intrusiveness and individual privacy.

Parcelforce and the CWU appreciate the need to balance these opportunities and fears to ensure that their investment in new technology and new ideas can be embraced seamlessly and with confidence.

Both parties agree that all individuals have a right to privacy at work and it is accepted that there is a mutual obligation of confidence and trust applied to every contract of employment and that all parties should act in a way so as not to break that relationship. Therefore it is agreed that any individual information gathered will remain personal to the individual and only used in line with this agreement for the reduction of risk of injury and to improve/ensure handling competency. Where general/trend data is to be used this will be anonymised.

It is agreed that this device is not being introduced as, or will be used as, a disciplinary or attendance tool. It will not be used to entrap people or for day to day performance management processes. Equally, it will not be used to enhance the ability of managers, or the evidence available, to take disciplinary action.

This approach is intended to be as supportive as possible for Parcelforce employees. There is absolutely no intention by PFW to use this project or the remedial action in any punitive way and it will be delivered in a 'Blame-Free' culture.

The initiative is designed to help prevent and avoid accidents and injuries; it is not in any way about identifying liability. It is agreed that the trial and its aims were not a means of attributing culpability to employees but in essence about promoting and encouraging safe working methods and thus reducing accidents, through a collaborative approach.

Both parties agree that the whole approach to this activity should be a positive experience for the individual. Support and the opportunity to identify development areas will be provided through positive help, coaching and encouragement via local Managers, CWU Representatives and Depot Trainers.

It is therefore agreed by both parties that the following principles will be applied:

- Where the availability of devices permit, the use of devices will be mandatory for new starters during their induction training.
- 'Backtrack' devices should be used on a voluntary basis as part of the medical rehabilitation process following a manual handling related accident/injury.
- 'Backtrack' devices should be used on a voluntary basis as part of the on-going process to identify opportunities for improvement and maintaining safe posture during handling activities.

All relevant Health & Safety consultation in relation to the 'Backtrack' device has been concluded.

Deployment

It has now been jointly agreed to deploy the 'Backtrack' device across PFW Depot and Hub operations in line with the principles stated above.

Any questions of interpretation, implementation or application of this agreement shall be referred to the National signatories of this agreement as a matter of urgency and will be dealt with inside the provisions of the National IR Framework Agreement.



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