

Dear valued partner,

Lately we have noticed an increasing number of claims due to lifting and back related injuries which may often result in Hernias. Hernias are classified as Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) and can result in significant lost time to your company. Improper lifting techniques and over strain can directly result in back strains, hernias and other MSDs.

Do you know which job task is most at risk of hernia?

- According to NIOSH data, the occupation that is most likely to encounter a hernia:
 - a) Mechanics
 - b) Health Aids and Nurses
 - c) Laborers (non-construction)
 - d) Truck Driver

Answer at the end of the email.

(Missed a previous email? [Click here](#) to see an archive of previous month's safety emails on Rockwood's Loss Control website.)



WHAT IS A HERNIA?

Your abdomen is covered in layers of muscle and strong tissue that help you move and protect your internal organs. A hernia is a gap in this muscular wall that allows the contents inside the abdomen to protrude outward. There are different types of hernias, but the most common hernias occur in the belly or groin areas.

Q: What Does a Belly or Abdominal (Ventral) Hernia Feel Like?

A: If you have a ventral hernia in the belly area, you may see or feel a bulge along the outer surface of the abdomen. Typically, patients with ventral hernias describe mild pain, aching or a pressure sensation at the site of the hernia. The discomfort worsens with any activity that puts a strain on the abdomen, such as heavy lifting, running or bearing down during bowel movements. Some patients have a bulge but do not have discomfort.

Symptoms in Men

- A bulge you can see or feel
- Aching pain in the area
- A feeling of pressure
- A tugging sensation of the scrotum around the testicles
- Pain that worsens with activities that add pressure to the area, such as heavy lifting, pushing and straining




Symptoms in Women

- Aching or sharp pain
- Burning sensation
- A bulge at the hernia site, but this may not be present with a groin hernia
- Discomfort that increases with activity

Information taken from [Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)



SAFETY TIPS FOR PREVENTING HERNIAS

| | | |
|--|--|---|
|  | <u>AVOID HAZARDS:</u> | Get assistance when lifting heavy or awkward objects. Use mechanical lift devices (dolly, forklift, cart, or hoist). Limit the load by lightening the load and/or make more trips. |
|  | <u>USE APPROPRIATE LIFTING PRACTICES:</u> | Before lifting stand close to the load and get a firm grip. Always maintain the load close to your body. Maintain your back in a straight position when lifting and lower loads. Use YOUR LEGS to smoothly and slowly lift and lower loads. |
|  DON'Ts | <u>DON'T!:</u> | Never carry a load that obstructs your view! Never use your back to lift. Never twist your back. Never carry a load that you cannot maintain a firm and comfortable grip! Never lift a load over your head or an obstacle! Never carry a load if the floor is slippery or cluttered! Never lift a load that is too heavy or bulky. Always ask for help. |

Rockwood Resources:

- [Safety Tips - Back Safety](#)
- [Toolbox Safety Talks - Back Safety](#)
- [Conveyers & Stationary Equipment \(Shoveling\)](#)
- You can find additional Rockwood Toolbox Talks [here](#).
- Contact us for a Stretching Program for your company.

MSHA, OSHA and other Resources:

- NIOSH | [Identify Risk Factors for WMSDs | NIOSH | CDC](#)
- [ErgoMine](#) | MSHA ErgoMine is an ergonomics audit tool designed specifically for mining. It includes: ergonomics audits for three types of mining operations; slip, trip, and fall hazard checklists; musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) risk factor evaluation forms; and a tool to document and track remedial actions to address identified deficiencies.
- [Hernias](#) | NIOSH data on Hernias that include breakdowns of hernias per industry, job task and many other data points. Hernia information can be found on page 69 of the web page with Tables listed below.
- National Safety Council | [Facts about Backs](#)
- National Safety Council | [MSDs 101](#) (Musculoskeletal Disorders)

- The Pennsylvania Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Health & Safety Division offers numerous FREE safety webinars. To access the PATHS Training Calendar visit www.dli.pa.gov/paths



Learn more about **HERNIAS AND BACK SAFETY** on Streamery

Every Rockwood policy includes access to Streamery, a vast safety library with videos, quizzes and more resources to help you promote safety in your workplace. If you don't have access, contact us to get a username. Enter the SKU number below to find the recommended video.

Watch [Streamery](#) videos on **BACK SAFETY**:

- **Back Safety Basics:** 10 min / SKU: 2575 + 2575-S / English & Spanish
- **Back Safety Update:** 21 min / SKU 1869 + 1869-S / English & Spanish
- **Back Safety: Exercise and Ergonomics:** 15 min / SKU: 2557 + 2557-S / English & Spanish
- **Many more on Streamery**



BONUS MATERIALS:

1. **OSHA LOG POSTING – February through April**

Each February through April, [employers must post a summary](#) of the injuries and illnesses recorded the previous year. Also, if requested, copies of the records must be provided to current and former employees, or their representatives.

2. **SEAT BELT COVERS**



Don't forget that Rockwood Casualty is providing **FREE** high visibility seatbelt covers to our insured to assist in enforcement of seatbelt use by employees. Please contact safetysolutions@rockwoodcasualty.com to make a request for your company and specify orange or yellow.



Questions? Feel free to reach out: As always, your Rockwood partners are available to answer your questions and help you promote safety in the workplace. Contact Rockwood Loss Control for any support you need.

ANSWER: According to NIOSH data, the most likely occupation to encounter a hernia:

- a) Mechanics
- b) Health Aids and Nurses
- c) Laborers (non-construction)
- d) Truck Driver**

While all these answers were listed in the top 18, Truck Drivers were the most at risk of hernias.



#RockwoodSafetySolutions #LossControl #SafetyTips

Thank you for your continued partnership,

Rockwood Loss Control Team

Safetysolutions@rockwoodcasualty.com