



July 22, 2009

Dear Fellow Employee,

This is the third in a series of letters published in partnership to provide safety and wellness tips and resources to IAM-represented employees of United's Airport Operations Division.

Airport work is physical, especially below the wing. Whether standing all day or moving bags, most injuries come from overexertion. Year to date, 65% of United's OSHA recordable and lost time injuries are attributed to strains and sprains from lifting, pushing and pulling. Avoiding overexertion is our number one opportunity to reduce lost time injuries.

Strains occur when muscles or ligaments are overstretched. Sprains occur when they actually tear. Muscles can become agitated over time. A repetitive action like throwing a baseball at home or loading bags at work can stretch muscles, and then an abrupt movement during another activity can cause a more serious strain or sprain.

There are several simple things you can do to prevent and minimize sprains and strains:

- Many exertion injuries come from incorrectly moving bulky objects. Hold them close when lifting, use your legs versus your back and keep the load at waist level.
- If objects are large or awkward, either break them down into smaller loads or get help.
- Inspect moving equipment or dollies before you use them and plan the entire path of travel, including steps or stairs, to ensure you don't find yourself in an unexpected or uncomfortable position and cause a strain or sprain.
- Repetitive tasks can stress specific muscle groups and cause them to either seize suddenly or create a chronic injury gradually over time. When performing repetitive tasks, adjust your working position occasionally and stretch during breaks to maintain flexibility.
- Finally, over reaching causes many back strains and sprains. Never reach over or around an obstacle to lift a load. Instead, walk around the obstacle to place yourself in a position to lift properly. Use a step stool or ladder if something is out of reach.

Recently, United launched a new program called MoveSmart® to teach lifting, pulling, and pushing techniques in a unique way using principles from the martial arts. The techniques can help avoid injuries and the concepts can be applied at both work and home. MoveSmart launched in IAD, SEA and, most recently, ORD and it will roll-out to other stations this year. Ninety-five percent of the employees who took the class said they use the information in their daily lives and would recommend the class to their peers. Look for the training at your station.

Your friends, family and coworkers depend on you to be safe 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at both home and work. Use the tips above to help avoid exertion injuries and stay healthy.

Handwritten signature of Scott Dolan in black ink.

Scott Dolan  
SVP – Airport Operations, Cargo and UAX

Handwritten signature of Richard Delaney in black ink.

Richard Delaney  
President - IAMAW 141