



Selected musculoskeletal disorders reported in 2008-09

(days lost and off as at 31 August 2009)

DEFINITIONS

LTI = lost time injury

Results in absence from work for at least one full day or shift any time after the day or shift on which the injury occurred.

DI = disabling injury

Work injury (not LTI) that results in injured person being unable to fully perform his or her regular job any time after the day or shift on which the injury occurred, regardless of whether or not the person is rostered to work.

Days lost covers the days the person does not work when scheduled to do so.

Days off includes days lost, rostered days off, and days when alternative or light duties are performed or hours are restricted. This is effectively the time when the person is not able to do the job for which they were employed.

Lost time injuries

- Minor LTI (1 day lost, 10 days off) – Surface – Lumbar pain after lifting a valve. Three operators were carrying out housekeeping duties, including removing a 350 mm control valve. Two operators bent down to assess the load. The second operator decided it was too heavy and advised third operator that a forklift was required. While this discussion was going on, the first operator had commenced lifting the valve on his own. The second and third operators had continued with housekeeping duties when they heard the first operator calling for assistance as he had injured his back – he had the valve at waist height but could not lower it. The second and third operators helped him to slide the valve onto the back of a ute that was parked nearby.
- Serious LTI (5 days lost, 14 days off) – Surface – Employee carrying 50 kg dust bags by himself.
- Repetitive work. An incident earlier that day may have also contributed. The dust bags weren't being stacked properly and started to slide down. The employee rushed over to hold the bags up as a colleague was directly below them.
- Serious LTI (3 days lost, 20 days off) – Surface – Rigger was dragging rubber mats across the floor when he felt a "twinge" in his lower back.
- Serious LTI (3 days lost, 31 days off) – Surface – Employee was trying to remove a bolt from a surface miner with a breaker bar when the bolt released with a sudden crack and he felt a jarring pain in his right upper arm.
- Serious LTI (5 days lost, 31 days off) – Surface – Employee was shovelling iron ore and felt a "pulling" pain in abdominal area. Had a rest and returned to shovelling. Pain continued so reported to team leader. Sought medical attention.
- Serious LTI (18 days lost, 36 days off) – Surface – Operator was lifting 20 kg oil containers onto the back of a ute. Felt severe pain in his shoulder when he reached above his head.
- Serious LTI (4 days lost, 66 days off) – Surface – While exiting dozer, operator turned to descend the steps and felt pain in back.
- Serious LTI (17 days lost, 65 days off) – Surface – Worker was changing skirting liners on conveyor when he felt his back tighten. Woke up in extreme pain after a few hours sleep following his shift.
- Serious LTI (31 days lost, 69 days off) – Surface – Fitter was tightening U bolts on canter truck with power bar and felt something "let go" in shoulder.
- Serious LTI (2 days lost, 142 days off) – Surface – After end of shift, worker experienced stiffness and soreness in the lower back. Was not sure of time of accident as only felt the pain after shift finished. Shift involved the collection, with three other people, of about 200 samples from blast holes in the morning, data entry, dispatch of samples, collection of items from core yard to complete ore mark ups, then ore mark up, which took about four hours with six people involved.

- Serious LTI (30 days lost, 177 days off) – Surface – Operator had pain in left shoulder radiating to cervical and upper thoracic spine caused by repetitive use in driving actions. Operator reported that this was an injury from childhood and she normally managed it herself. She had reported it as she was asked to go stick picking and didn't want to aggravate the shoulder. Injury has been reclassified as restricted work injury as it is not thought to be related to previous injury.
- Serious LTI (17 days lost, 212 days off) – Surface – Worker undertook maintenance on the wash deck, including working on screens and discharge lips, which involved kneeling for long periods. No pain during or at end of shift. Left knee was sore the next morning.
- Serious LTI (90 days lost, 324 days off) – Surface – Process technician was shutting down leach process. While shutting the third compartment air spargers block valve (ball valve), he felt a sharp pain in right shoulder. Valve is at chest height and tight to operate.

Disabling injuries

- Minor DI (1 day off) – Surface – Bogger operator felt pain in lower back while carrying a light vehicle spring on even ground.
- Minor DI (4 days off) – Surface – Worker installing pipe work for a pump. Strained back when moving the pipe along the ground with a jimmy bar.
- Minor DI (5 days off) – Underground – Worker strained back when lifting paste pipes onto back of ute.
- Minor DI (5 days off) – Surface – Fitter had to stand with restricted posture to swing cooling tower blanks 250 mm on cooling tower. This required getting behind the pipe and working side-on and close to the job for about 30 minutes in total. Task also involved lifting the blank out and back into position with assistance. No pain was felt during the task, but minor discomfort was felt in lower back when having lunch. Fitter carried out duties for rest of shift and felt no discomfort until early hours on next morning. Previous day's activities involved awkward tasks fitting discharge blank on recycle drag conveyor.
- Minor DI (12 days lost) – Surface – Driver felt sharp pain in groin area as he stepped down from haul truck. Reported to occupational health nurse the next day with numbness and tingling in the injured area.
- Minor DI (13 days off) – Surface – Worker felt pain shoot from neck through to right shoulder while on scaffold using a rattlegun with outstretched right arm.
- Serious DI (22 days off) – Surface – Driller strained his lower back while dismounting via the drill rig ladder.
- Serious DI (23 days off) – Underground – Jumbo operator had finished boring and decided to move the mesh and bolts out of the drive back to the access way so they wouldn't be fired upon. Operator felt a twinge in his lower back while shifting the bolts. No pain was evident until end of the shift, and it then increased over time. Operator referred to medical centre with lower back muscle sprain and then received physiotherapy treatment.
- Serious DI (24 days off) – Surface – Night shift worker woke during day with strained right shoulder and elbow. Reported soreness to group leader that night. Injury was attributed to extended period during previous shift hammering a drain valve that had been difficult to open.
- Serious DI (26 days off) – Surface – While disembarking a truck, employee felt a pain in his right shoulder as he swung down holding a hand support rail.
- Serious DI (26 days off) – Surface – Warehouse officer leant over a cage and picked up 5 kg bag. Felt sharp pain in lower right side of back.
- Serious DI (34 days off) – Underground – Person felt a sharp pain in his back while attempting to remove a cable that was caught on the ground between rocks and mud.
- Serious DI (40 days off) – Surface – Employee was in store all day painting lines on the floor between bins. Noticed lower back pain in the afternoon.
- Serious DI (55 days off) – Surface – A vacation student working as a field assistant dislocated his shoulder while attempting to lift a sample bag onto his shoulder using an "incorrect lifting technique".
- Serious DI (56 days off) – Surface – Employee developed pain in right shoulder after using rattle gun and sledge hammer. Rattle gun had been used to tighten cutting edges on scraper bowl. Employee then replaced the side routers on the bowl. Pain occurred when he was using a 14 pound sledge hammer to knock out one of the router retaining pins, after trying a smaller hammer. An assistant was holding the drift and the employee had adopted the correct posture or stance.
- Serious DI (59 days off) – Underground – While undoing a 110 mm poly fitting with a C spanner, the operator felt a pain in the front left shoulder region. He was pushing the spanner away from his body to undo the fitting.
- Serious DI (69 days off) – Surface – Operator developed wrist pain after driving star pickets into hard ground.