

# Reusable Bag Guidelines

Developed for:  
**The Grocery Industry**



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## Preface and Acknowledgements

These Guidelines, were developed in partnership with representative members of individual grocery employers, Ontario's labour organizations, employer associations, suppliers, health and safety associations and workers.

- Loblaw Companies Ltd
- Sobeys
- Metro
- Longos
- Walmart
- United Food and Commercial Workers
- Canadian Auto Workers
- Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors
- Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers
- Retail Council of Canada
- Pan Oston
- N-Take Ecodurable Products
- Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS) – formerly The Ontario Service Safety Alliance and The Industrial Accident Prevention Association

Special thanks are extended to Don Patten (WSPS) and Mike Cuzzetto (Loblaw Companies Ltd) for sharing their ergonomic expertise and guidance in developing this document.

We appreciate The Best of Britain, Nestle Canada, RedLeaf, Norstad, SIR Solutions, N-Take and Pan Oston for supplying products for the photo shoot.

Finally, we would like to thank Eliz Hillier, Key Account Manager (WSPS) for her identifying an opportunity for industry stakeholders to work together on a common issue. Eliz ensured the key people were at the table to develop this document that will assist in preventing injuries as a result of using reusable bags. Her tenacity ensured the project was kept on track and concluded with a valuable resource for the grocery and retail industry. The support and participation of everyone who contributed to the development of this document is greatly appreciated.

## Introduction

Musculoskeletal Injuries are a challenge for many grocery store chains. In 2009, sprain and strain injuries accounted for 51% of the lost time injury claims, as reported to the Ontario Workplace Safety & Insurance Board.

Scanning and bagging groceries is a key process and involves a large portion of the employee base in a grocery store. Cashiers experience the greatest proportion of work-related injuries (35% in 2009). Most of the injuries result from the physical demands of scanning and bagging groceries.

In June 2009, a grocery retailer raised the concern of cashier ergonomic issues with the introduction of reusable bags to Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS). This concern stemmed from the City of Toronto plastic bag ban, requiring retailers to charge customers for their plastic bags. The retailer was interested in learning from others if this was a more wide-spread challenge in the industry, and if so was this an opportunity to identify, as an industry, best practices for controlling the hazards.

Although environmentally responsible, reusable bags have contributed to a number of new concerns including strains and sprains for the cashiers who are handling them. The existing cash stations were not originally designed to accommodate the new bags as they come in many sizes and shapes.

The introduction of the bags also contributed to theft and the potential of violence as well as potential exposure to biological hazards from food handling. These issues will not be addressed in this guideline and the grocery store chain is encouraged to refer back to their food safety, loss prevention and violence in the workplace policies already in place.

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services facilitated a group of grocery industry leaders, associations, unions and suppliers to explore the issues, current best practices and identify possible solutions to this issue.

## Strategy

A group of key stakeholders met with Ergonomists from the industry to outline the scope of work and project timelines. The stakeholders were identified and invited to the table including representation from:

- 5 Grocers – Loblaws, Sobeys, Metro, Longos, Walmart
- 3 Industry Associations – Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors, Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, Retail Council of Canada
- 2 Unions – United Food and Commercial Workers and Canadian Auto Workers
- 2 Suppliers – Pan Ostons (cashier stations) and N-Take (bag products)
- Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (a prevention partner of Health and Safety Ontario)
- Workers

## Approach

1. Reviewed the current situation and impacts;
2. Explored options for improvement based on the impacts of the current situation;
3. Developed guidelines, supported by all stakeholders; and
4. Communicated recommendations

### Current Situation and Impact

Current experiences, impacts and factors contributing to the issue were reviewed. The following key issues were identified:

- There is an increased risk to grocery cashiers in bagging groceries – specifically musculoskeletal disorders and possible exposure to biological hazards and violence in the workplace.

#### Musculoskeletal Disorders

The weight of individual bags increased from an average weight of 10 lb capacity for the average plastic bag to 28 lbs and 38 lbs for the respective medium and larger versions of the reusable bags. A survey in Australia revealed that in some cases cashiers shift almost 1000 bags a day or 6 tonnes of goods with plastic bags. An increase of 3-4 times the weight and volume per load without effective changes to the design and process, can lead to an increased risk of injury.

#### Biological Hazards

The largest food safety concern when using reusable grocery bags and bins is cross-contamination. Because these types of grocery bags and bins are used frequently, they can pick up bacteria from the foods they carry as well as from areas such as the grocery cart, the ground and the car. These reusable bags and bins are often used to carry other items as well. Bacteria can transfer onto foods when placed into the bags and bins and can cause foodborne illness for the customer and cashier.

#### Violence in the Workplace

There is a potential for violence in the workplace when cashiers encounter irate customers due to the change of the bagging process. There is also a potential of violence when these bags are used for theft and create a need for increased loss prevention strategies.

#### Other

- There is a risk to the customer when lifting heavy bags and potential liability issues.
- Customer service could be compromised. Who fills the bags – the customer or the cashier?
- There is a potential conflict between environmental benefit of the reusable bag and the safety of the cashier

## Options for Improvement

Based on the information and impact, four areas of focus were identified:

1. Reusable bag design
2. Cashier education
3. Customer education
4. Cashier station design

Issues regarding food safety and violence in the workplace should be referred to in the store policies that address them.

## Goal

- Develop guidelines to manage the existing situation
- Determine the future state of best practice principles for the design of cashier stations and reusable bags

## Findings and Recommendations

### Findings

Ergonomists conducted ergonomic assessments of the use of the reusable grocery bag. They set out to determine what factors in the reusable bag design and its integration into current cashier work stations have caused or could cause musculoskeletal disorders. Four different grocery store formats were visited to conduct the assessments.

### Bags

There are a number of sizes and characteristics of bags in the marketplace which are brought into grocery stores by customers:

<b>Weight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The average filled weight for a small bag was 4.5 kg (10 lbs), medium bag 13 kg (28 lbs) and large bag 17 kg (38 lbs).</li> <li>▪ Customers predominately brought in the medium and large sized bags</li> </ul>
<b>Material</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Soft cloth type bags required increased push forces to move on the surfaces on the rear deck in comparison with the harder surface bags</li> <li>▪ Soft cloth type bags collapse making it more difficult to hold open when filling</li> </ul>
<b>Handles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The long handle loops on most bags increase the height of the arms and awkward shoulder position when lifting to reposition or move to the back deck</li> </ul>
<b>Bag Holder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The handles on the bags slipped off the bag well handle holder and did not keep the bag open resulting in the cashier having to hold the bag open with one hand while loading with the other hand or not using the bag holder at all</li> </ul>

### Work Process

- Cashiers rarely adjusted the adjustable cashier work stations although there is a considerable difference in the heights of cashiers
- Most cashiers lifted the bag by the handles raising the lifting height from a fixed conveyor belt height of 86cm (34 inches) to 142 cm (56 inches) resulting in an extended reach and awkward shoulder positions
- With a limited number of bags brought in by customers, cashiers tend to overfill the bags creating increased weights
- When filling bags, the cashier did not leave enough room to properly place the filled bags on the rear deck, resulting in the cashiers having to lift the filled bags over other bags or bagging on product raising the vertical height
- Cashiers rarely placed the bags in the bag wells. Bags were often filled on the counter
- Bags with rigid bottoms were not leaned on their sides to reduce the height for filling
- Rather than sliding the bags to the customer, the cashier lifted the bags to the customers using the looped handles which increases shoulder strain and effort as the cashier was lifting the bag further away from themselves



## Cashier Work Stations

Some cashiers using the scan and pass workstations assist customers in bagging resulting in extended reach as the workstation is not set up for bagging. There are two basic designs of cashier workstations

### The Scan and Pass Design

In this design the cashier scans the item and passes it down the conveyor belt. This design can be a concern because:

Some of the cashier work station designs are adjustable and some are not.

- The bag rack may accommodate some of the sizes of reusable bags, but not all



### The Scan, Bag and Pass Design

- In this design the cashier scans the item, places it in a bag and then moves the filled bag down the conveyor belt.



## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following were recommended:

### Bags

- There should be a standard size for small and medium bags which limits the weight of the bag to an average of 10kg (22 lbs)
- Bag handles be reduced to 10 cm, or add a second set of smaller handles for lifting and leave the longer handles for customer carrying

### Work Process

- Consider the cashier workstation design, when developing the appropriate work process to manage the physical demands of the bagging activity
- When using the scan and pass cashier station, instruct cashiers to place the bag on its side when packing to avoid awkward shoulder positioning,
- Educate cashiers on distributing the weight between bags so the average weight in a bag does not exceed 10 Kg (22 lbs)
- Educate the cashier to adjust the cashier workstation (where applicable) to a comfortable working height. The best height of the workstation is 5-10 cm below elbow height.

### Cashier Work Station Considerations for Future Design Purchases

- Consider an adjustable cashier workstation
- Consider a slide or a cover that fits between the conveyor, runs over the bag well onto the collection table to reduce lifting of bags
- Consider an adjustable bag well that will accommodate all sizes of bags

Based on these findings and recommendations, the guideline is to include:

- an assessment component to help the Store Managers, JHSC and Union to document what is currently in place,
- best practices in order to consider and implement, to minimize or eliminate any identified hazards,
- recommendations for consideration when future changes are proposed, whether it be bag purchases, policies and procedures, or new cashier work station designs.

## Guidelines for the Current State

As most Grocery Stores work with a number of different sized reusable bags and cashier work stations, the first step in the process is to assess what is currently in place.

The assessment tool provides questions regarding :

- What types of bags are the cashiers currently handling and filling?
- How do cashiers handle the bags?
- What cashier work station designs are being used?
- What policies and procedures are in place for handling product with the current design of cashier workstations?
- What training tools are in place for the cashiers and supervisors ?

Using the assessment tool in **Appendix A** review your current operations.

Once you have conducted the current state assessment, you are ready to identify gaps and implement best practices. Using **Appendix B** review best practices and determine which best practices work best for your current operations.

## Guidelines for Future State

Cashing through groceries is a key process. The store wants to design a process that supports a desired customer experience and is effective, productive, efficient and safe. The health risk from manual handling of reusable bags can be reduced by:

- Promoting the use of a standardized reusable bag design
- Adopting approaches to limit the weight in each bag to safe levels
- Determining an optimal design of the cashier work station for the work processes
- Providing effective training and supervision on policies and procedures

The owner /manager of the grocery store needs to consider what processes will maximize productivity and still provide good customer service. For example, customer bagging their own groceries, rotating cashiers. **Appendix C** provides guidance when considering changing processes, purchasing new reusable bags and cashier work stations in the future.

## Resources

Institute For Work and Health Health and Safety Smart Planner, 2010

<http://www.iwh.on.ca/smart-planner>

Commission de la Sante et de la Securite du Travail du Quebec (CSST) ; Ergonomic Checkouts for Supermarket Cashiers, 2004, 54p

Washington State Department of Labour and Industries Grocery Store Checkstands

[wisha-training.lni.wa.gov/training/.../GroceryCheckstands.pps](http://wisha-training.lni.wa.gov/training/.../GroceryCheckstands.pps)

Occupational Safety and Health Administration Guidelines for Retail Grocery Stores, 2004

<http://www.osha.gov/ergonomics/guidelines/retailgrocery/retailgrocery.html>

Worksafe BC Ergonomic Analysis of Checkstand Design for Safeway (BC) and UFCW , 2010

[http://www2.worksafebc.com/PDFs/ergonomics/ergonomic\\_analysis\\_checkstand\\_design\\_Safeway/Part3.pdf](http://www2.worksafebc.com/PDFs/ergonomics/ergonomic_analysis_checkstand_design_Safeway/Part3.pdf)

Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario Resource Manual for the MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario, 2008

Ontario Service Safety Alliance Check it Out – A Manager’s Guide to Comfortable Cashier Work, 2001

Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association, South Australian Branch, Skeletal Study and Work Practices Involving Plastic Bags and Retail Workers, 2008

[http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/upload/resources/publications/plastic-bag-phase-out/sda\\_skeletal\\_study\\_work\\_report\\_3.pdf](http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/upload/resources/publications/plastic-bag-phase-out/sda_skeletal_study_work_report_3.pdf)

Health Canada Health Canada Reminds Canadians to Avoid Cross-Contamination When Using Reusable Grocery Bags and Bins, 2009

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/\\_2009/2009\\_99-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/_2009/2009_99-eng.php)

Health Canada, Food Safety Tips For Reusable Grocery Bags and Bins, 2010

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/reusable-bags-sacs-reutilisable-eng.php>

## Appendix A – Current State Assessment

### Bag Types and Sizes

Customers bring in a number of different sized bags for filling. This assessment should be conducted on a busy day, viewing more than one cashier work station and of both the full service and speed lines.

To properly complete the assessment you need to understand the approximate dimensions of reusable bags. The following outlines those dimensions, as well as a miscellaneous category:

#### Small



- Bag Size:
- 13.58 x 10.24 x 7.1 in
- 34.5 x 26 x 18 cm

#### Medium



- Bag Size:
- 14.2 x 11.8 x 7.1 in
- 36 x 30 x 18 cm

#### Large



- Bag Size:
- 17.99 x 15.98 x 7.1 in
- 45.7 x 40.6 x 18 cm

### Miscellaneous – some examples



Backpack



Large Tote Bag



Grocery Bin




Cardboard Box

## Bag Assessment Questions

*If you check a box that is shaded, refer to the Appendix B for best practices to address this issue.*




	Frequently Occurs 60-100% of the time	Occasionally Occurs 30-60% of the time	Rarely/Never Occurs 0-30% of the time	Not Applicable
How often do customers bring in reusable bags?				
How often do cashiers handle small bags?  13.58 x 10.24 x 7.1 in 34.5 x 26 x 18 cm				
How often do cashiers handle medium bags?  14.2 x 11.8 x 7.1 in 36 x 30 x 18 cm				
How often do cashiers handle large bags?  17.99 x 15.98 x 7.1 in 45.7 x 40.6 x 18 cm				
How often does the cashier handle bags in good repair? Example no rips, handles attached				
How often does the cashier handle bags that are not clean?				
If using the bag well, how often do the bag handle loops stay on the bag holder?				
How often does the cashier have difficulty holding the bag open because of the material the bag is composed of?				
How often does the bag material create difficulty pushing the bag across the counter?				

## Handling Of Bags Questions




<i>If you check a box that is shaded, refer to the Appendix B for best practices to address this issue.</i>				
	Frequently Occurs 60-100% of the time	Occasionally Occurs 30-60% of the time	Rarely/Never Occurs 0-30% of the time	Not Applicable
How often do the cashiers adjust the cashier workstations, if applicable?				
<b>Scan and Pass Workstations</b>				
 <p>How often are the cashiers leaving heavy awkward items in the carts and scanning with a hand scanner or key punching the UPCs?</p>				
How often are the cashiers assisting customers in bagging groceries when using a scan and pass cashier workstation?				
<b>Scan, Bag and Pass Workstations</b>				
How often are the cashiers leaving heavy awkward items in the carts and scanning with a hand scanner or key punching the UPCs ?				
How often are the cashiers filling the bag sizes appropriately for the products to ensure a safe weight of 10Kg per bag? For example heavy products in the small bags and larger lighter products in larger bags?				
How often are the cashiers overloading the bag at customer's request and lifting it?				
How often are the bags being placed in the bag wells?				
How often do the cashiers use one hand to keep the bag open while loading with the other hand?				



*If you check a box that is shaded, refer to the Appendix B for best practices to address this issue.*

	Frequently Occurs 60-100% of the time	Occasionally Occurs 30-60% of the time	Rarely/Never Occurs 0-30% of the time	Not Applicable
<p>How often do the cashiers lift the filled bag by the handles?</p>  <p>How often do the cashiers lift the bag using two handles?</p>				
How often does the top of the bag in the bag well (not the handles) reach the top of the conveyor?				
How often do the cashiers fill the bags on the area level to the counter?				
How often do the cashiers use the conveyor system to slide the full bags to the customer?				
 <p>How often do the cashiers have their shoulders shrugged?</p>				
 <p>How often do the cashiers have their arms above shoulder height?</p>				

*If you check a box that is shaded, refer to the Appendix B for best practices to address this issue.*

	Frequently Occurs 60-100% of the time	Occasionally Occurs 30-60% of the time	Rarely/Never Occurs 0-30% of the time	Not Applicable
 <p>How often are the cashiers' necks or heads twisted, bending forward, backward or to the side?</p>				
<p>How often are the cashiers' backs bent or twisted while packing a bag?</p> 				
<p>How often do the cashiers load bags below the waist or above the shoulders?</p> 				

## Cashier Work Station Assessment Questions

There are two types of cashier workstations




Scan and pass






Scan, bag and pass

*If you check a box that is shaded, refer to the Appendix B for best practices to address this issue.*


	Frequently Occurs 60-100% of the time	Occasionally Occurs 30-60% of the time	Rarely/Never Occurs 0-30% of the time	Not Applicable
<p>If adjustable, how often are the cashiers adjusting their workstations?</p>  <p>Collection table height adjusted to accommodate sliding the bag from bag holder</p>				
<p>If the bag holder is adjustable, how often are the bag well heights adjusted to accommodate the different heights of the cashiers and bags?</p>				
<p>How often does the bag well not accommodate the bags sizes?</p>				
<p>How often is there not enough room on the collection table to move the filled bags?</p>				

*If you check a box that is shaded, refer to the Appendix B for best practices to address this issue.*

	Frequently Occurs 60-100% of the time	Occasionally Occurs 30-60% of the time	Rarely/Never Occurs 0-30% of the time	Not Applicable
How often does the cashier come into contact with sharp edges on the cashier workstation?				
How often is the bag loaded and needs to be lifted to move along to the customer?				
 <p>How often does the cashier lean over the check stand or twist the back to move the bags onto the collection table?</p> <p>Twisting</p>				
 <p>How often is the work at the cashier workstation above elbow height?</p>				
 <p>How often is the work at the cashier workstation below elbow height?</p>				


## Policies And Procedures Assessment Questions

*If you check a box that is shaded, refer to the Appendix B for best practices to address this issue.*

	Yes	No	Comments
Is there a policy for the cashier to refuse to handle reusable bags that are unclean or in disrepair?			
Is there a policy to only fill bags to a certain weight?			
Is there a policy about adjusting the cashier workstation prior to each shift?			
Is there a preventative maintenance schedule for the cashier workstation components?			
Is there a policy to incorporate diversity into the cashier's work routine? Example: putting away unwanted items			
Is there a rotation schedule for right and left handed stations – if available?			
 <p>Are cashiers monitored and corrected for safe work practices?</p>			
Are cashiers returning from a prolonged absence, eased into the job tasks?			
Is there a policy for Supervisors to handle escalation of customer complaints?			
Is there a policy for the customers to unload the groceries onto the conveyor belt for scanning?			
Is there a policy for the cashiers to ask the customers to leave awkward or heavy items in the cart and scan the item?			
Do the cashiers use hand sanitizer when appropriate?			

## Training Assessment Questions

*If you check a box that is shaded, refer to the Appendix B for best practices to address this issue.*

	Yes	No	Comments
Are cashiers trained on safe lifting procedures as a new hire?			
Do cashiers receive refresher training on safe lifting procedures on a regular basis?			
Are cashiers trained to handle customer complaints and expectations in regards to using the reusable bags?			
Are supervisors trained to handle customer complaints in an escalation beyond the cashier's role?			
 <p>Are cashiers, supervisors and the JHSC trained to recognize hazards of the job?</p> <p>Preferred Work Zone</p>			
Are cashiers trained on adjusting their workstation, as applicable?			
Are cashiers trained on packing different types of bags based on the cashier work station design?			
Are the cashiers trained on packing the bags with weights that do not exceed 10 kg (22 lbs)?			
Are cashiers trained on recognizing bags that should not be handled?			
Are supervisors trained to monitor and correct cashier behaviour?			
Are the cashiers trained on how to handle potential biological hazards like leaking meat packages?			



## Appendix B – Best Practices

### Bag

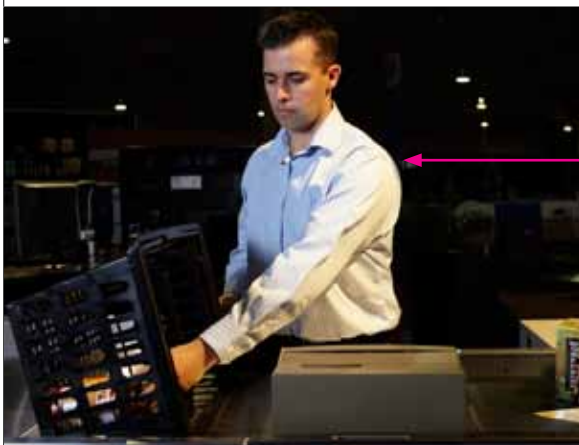
- Encourage cashiers to fill bags that are medium or small sized
- Provide cashiers with directions on what bags to accept for filling and what bags to discourage or partially fill – see training section for more details



- If the bag handle loops do not stay on the bag handle holder, have the cashier fill the bag on its side on the counter at waist level.



- If the bag material creates resistance when pushing the bag across the counter, lift the bag with two hands, with arms no higher than shoulders and no lower than the waist to the preferred area. Instruct the cashier to not bend or twist while moving the bag.



- If the customer brings in a tote for filling, have the cashier tip the tote on its side when filling to reduce the upper shoulder extension

## Handling of Bags



- Train and monitor cashiers on adjusting the cashier workstation prior to the start of shift
- Adjust height of collection table

### Scan and Pass Cashier Workstations



- Have the cashiers inform the customer to leave heavy awkward items in the carts and scan them with a hand scanner or key punch the UPCs



- If assisting the customer with bagging the groceries ensure the cashier is not bending, twisting or reaching to accommodate the workstation design



## Scan, Bag and Pass Cashier Workstation



- Have the cashiers inform the customer to leave heavy awkward items in the carts and scan them with a hand scanner or key punch the UPCs

- Have the cashier load up to 10 kg (22 lbs) in each bag. An example of this weight would be 24 cans of soda, a 10 kg bag of potatoes or flour, a case of bottled water, a large turkey, 3 large jugs of juice
- Support the cashier in not overloading the bag at customer's request and lifting it. Have communications for the customer informing them of the weight limit of the bags



- Have the cashier use the bag wells for loading groceries. If the bag well does not accommodate the bag size, have the cashier load the bag at counter level, on its side

- When possible have the cashier load the bag with two hands, to relieve the handling force on the one loading hand / arm



- Use power grip, keeping wrists straight and arms at waist level
- Have the cashier lift the bag with two hands, if the handles are long



- Adjust the bag well, where applicable, to ensure the top of the bag is level with the counter edge

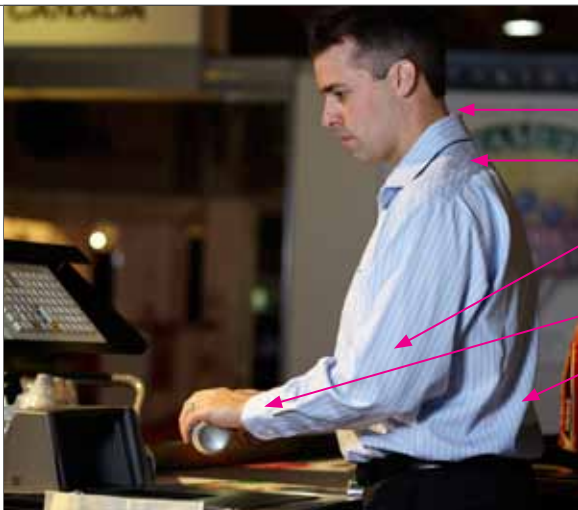
- Bag opening level with counter edge

- Have the cashiers fill the bag while it lies on its side to eliminate awkward shoulder and arm posture



- Shoulders and back are straight, not twisted
- Arms are between waist and shoulder level

- Encourage the cashier to use the conveyor system, where applicable, to move the filled bags along to the collection table
- Change the work process to avoid the shrugging of shoulders, working above shoulder height, awkward positions of the neck and head; twisting of the back and below waist work



- Avoid situations that require head and neck twisting, bending forward, backward or to the side.
- Keep shoulders and arms relaxed, not shrugged up or slumped down.
- Keep elbows close to the body
- Keep hands and wrists straight. Avoid twisting or bending
- Stand straight, avoid bending or leaning to the side



- Shoulders pointing to the right
- Waist twisted
- Feet pointing to the left



- Back bent

## Cashier Work Station

- Have the cashier adjust the cashier work station, where applicable, at the beginning of the shift, to accommodate for their size and provide a comfortable working height



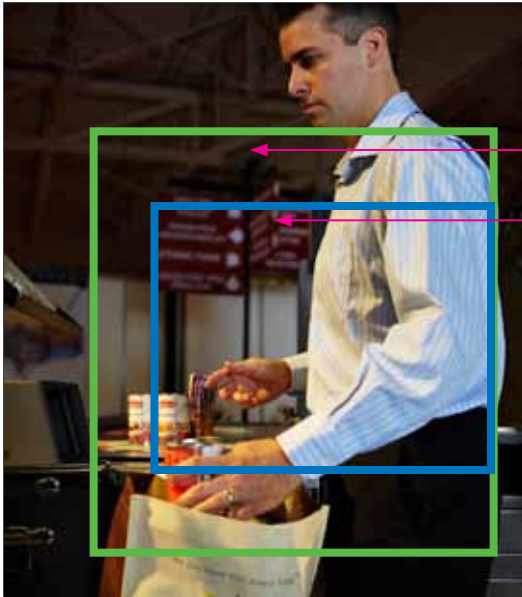
- Have the cashier adjust the bag well, where applicable, to accommodate the height of the bag and avoid awkward bending

- Have alternate methods of bagging for bags that do not fit into the bag wells
- Ensure the cashier understands the need to allow enough room on the collection table to move the filled bags
- Ensure all sharp edges of the cashier workstation are addressed
- Instruct the cashier on how to safely lift a loaded bag and move to the customer

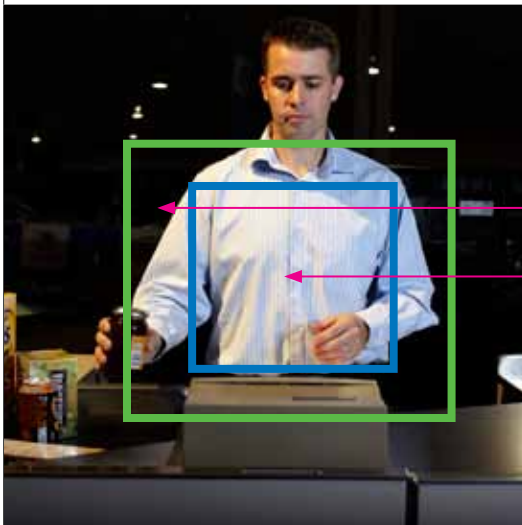


- Keep wrists straight
- Use power grip when gripping handles
- When possible, avoid lifting and slide bag to collection table

- Review the work process of moving the bags to eliminate leaning and twisting of the back
- Review the work process and make adjustments to ensure the cashier is working in the optimum work zone between the shoulders and waist. The best height of the workstation is 5-10 cm below elbow height. This is the best working height for light manipulative tasks, such as cashiering

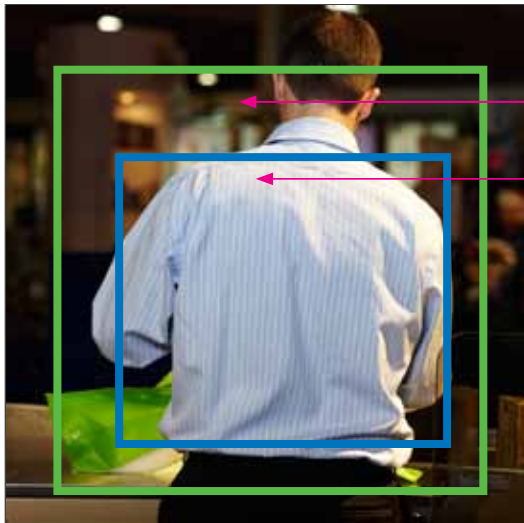


- Preferred Work Zone
- Best Work Zone



- Preferred Work Zone
- Best Work Zone





- Preferred Work Zone
- Best Work Zone



- Workstation is 5- 10 cm below the elbow height

## Procedures and Policies

- Develop a policy that provides guidance for the cashier on what bags to accept for filling (clean, unsoiled bags) and what bags to partially fill (oversized). Ensure there is a form of communication to the customers outlining these expectations
- Develop a policy that outlines the maximum acceptable weight per bag and what to do if the customer does not bring enough bags or insists on the bags being filled beyond that weight
- Develop a policy and instructions on how, and when, to adjust the cashier workstation, where applicable. Ensure that the supervisor has the responsibility to monitor and correct cashier behaviour
- Develop a preventative maintenance schedule based on the manufacturer's recommendations to ensure the equipment is kept in good repair
- Incorporate diversity into the cashier's work routine to break up repetitive movements over a period of time. Example: putting away unwanted groceries
- If available, develop a rotation schedule for right and left handed stations
- Develop a policy to ease cashiers returning from a prolonged absence, into the job tasks. For any cashier, the development of discomfort or injury should be reported immediately to the supervisor
- Develop a policy to have supervisors available to handle the escalation of customer complaints
- Have the customer unload carts/ baskets onto the conveyor belt for scanning, to avoid the cashier handling the product twice
- Develop a procedure where the cashier will ask the customers to leave heavy items in their cart and scan the items instead of handling
- Develop signage and a communication strategy for the public – outlining reusable bag policies
- Include hazard identification specific to the use of reusable bags into the Joint Health and Safety Committee monthly workplace inspection checklist
- Develop a policy on how to handle potential biological hazards like meat packages that are leaking onto the conveyor belt and using hand sanitizer

## Training

Training should be provided in a manner and language that all employees can understand. Training can be provided in new employee orientation and department meetings, as well as one on one when required.

- Provide the cashiers training on safe lifting practices as part of orientation
- Provide the cashiers refresher training on safe lifting practices on a regular basis and as needed for loading and moving reusable bags
- Provide the cashier customer service training and how to handle customer complaints and communicate expectations when using reusable bags
- Provide the supervisor with conflict management skills when customer complaints escalate beyond the cashier's role
- Train the JHSC, supervisors and cashiers on how to recognize, assess and control hazards related to the use of reusable bags



- Provide the cashier and supervisors training on how to adjust the cashier workstation, where applicable





- Train the cashiers on how to fill the bags safely based on the cashier workstation design



Load bag on side when not using a bag well



Adjust bag well to accommodate cashier height

- Train the cashiers on how to pack bags to ensure the loaded bag weight does not exceed 10 kg
- Provide refresher courses on packing along with guidelines on what bags not to accept:
  - Torn bags
  - Bags with broken handles
  - Bags with broken hooks
  - Moldy bags
  - Bags soiled with meat juice stain, decaying food, spilled sauces, sticky residue, animal excreta, urine, animal hair, soiled solid material
  - Bags with decaying odour
  - Bags with noxious smell
  - Bags with chemical residue
- Provide public education on the use of reusable bags and the need to respect the cashiers
- Train the supervisor and cashier on how to recognize good body posture and to correct poor body posture

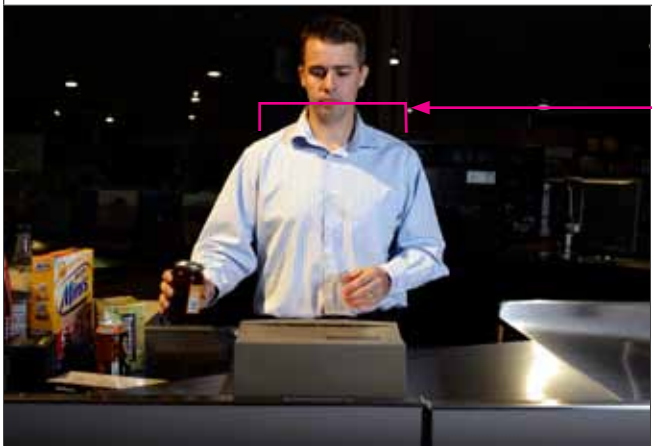


- Train the cashier on recognizing potential biological hazards and using the appropriate controls outlined in the policies

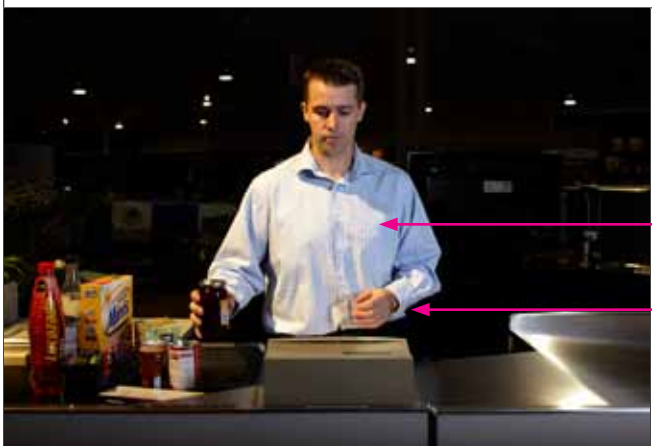
## Best Work Zone



- As far forward as your wrist when you hold your arm slightly bent



- As wide as the shoulders

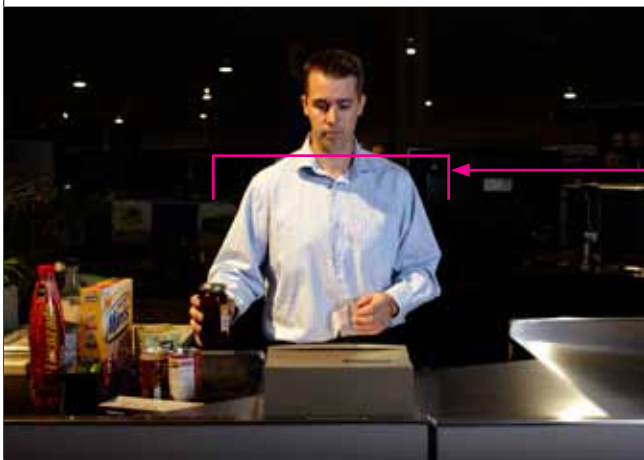


- Upper level at heart height
- Lower level at waist height

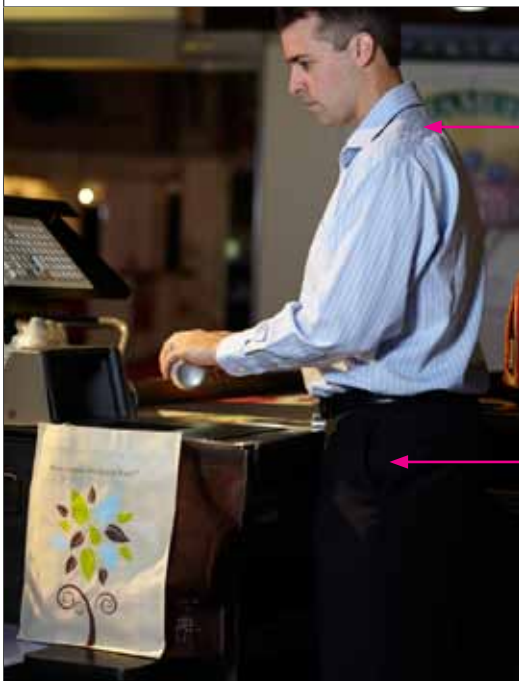
## Preferred Work Zone



- As far forward as your hand when you hold your arm out straight




- 30 cm or 12 inches on either side of the shoulders



- Upper level at shoulder height
- Lower level at tip of fingers with hands held at the side

## Appendix C – Future Design Considerations

### Bag

<b>Regular Bag</b>	<b>Ideal Size for Regular Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Size 40 cm x 38cm</li> <li>Depth 22cm</li> </ul>
<b>Smaller Bag</b> <b>Weight</b>	<b>Ideal Size for Heavier Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Size 34 cm x 30 cm</li> <li>Depth 20 cm</li> <li>10 kg (22 lbs) maximum</li> </ul>
<b>Handle</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handle should be built into the bag, with a solid or harder material for gripping</li> <li>Handle should be 10cm long for lifting and can have longer handles for carrying</li> <li>With the handles built into this size of bag, cashiers can place them on the bag hooks to fill as they would a standard plastic bag</li> </ul>
<b>Bottom of the bag</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible but firm enough to allow the cashiers to lean the bag when filling</li> </ul>
<b>Material</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Made from a strong woven material that easily slides across surfaces and is easily washed with soap and water</li> </ul>
<b>Hygiene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear washing directions printed on reusable bag</li> </ul>
<b>Handling Bag</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use bags with handles. Handles make the bags easier and less stressful to carry.</li> <li>Lift bags using two hands</li> </ul>
<b>Industry Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard bag sizing across the industry</li> <li>Standard weight per bag size</li> </ul>

## Cashier Work Station

- Consider a two tiered conveyor system where the back half of the belt drops down allowing the bag to be filled comfortably and where the employee does not have to lift at all



- Bags can slide from bag holder onto collection counter, ensuring filling and moving bag is in a straight line

- Ensure that all controls are easily accessible and the workstation is easy to adjust.
- Use weight limiting or indicating devices
- Have a single flat surface for the area where the bag is to be filled and moved away after being filled



- Provide a support frame to hold reusable bag to so the bag is hooked to permit it to be open when packing and slid off when full

- Design the hook and support frame so that it is adjustable in height through 15 cm to allow for tall or short cashiers
- Design the hook and support frame so that it is adjustable in height through 15 cm to allow for tall or short cashiers

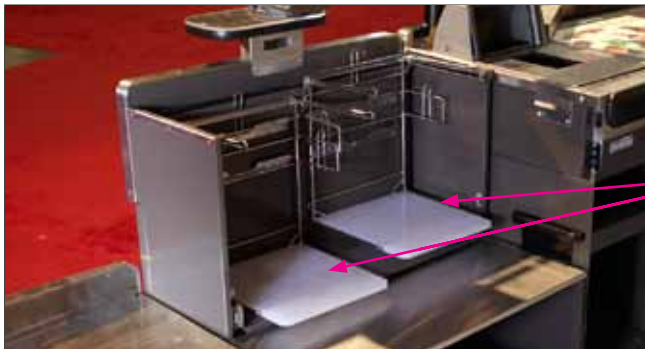


- Have an adjustable workstation height to accommodate different heights of cashiers. The best height of the workstation is 5-10 cm below elbow height. This is the best working height for light manipulative tasks, such as cashiering



- Workstation adjusted to height of cashier

- Ensure the adjustment is easy to do and the controls are accessible
- Consider having both right and left handed cashier work stations
- The cashier work station should have the ability to accommodate all bag sizes



- Provide an adjustable-height bag stand. In bagging areas, the tops of bags should be just below the conveyor height.

## Other Considerations

- Consider a slide or a cover that fits between the conveyor, runs over the bag well onto the collection table to prevent lifting of the bags.
- Implement diversity into the cashier position to break up the task – example – switching from right handed to left handed cashier station; putting away unwanted products; stocking magazines and confectionaries at the cash
- Consider the business case of having the customer bag their own groceries



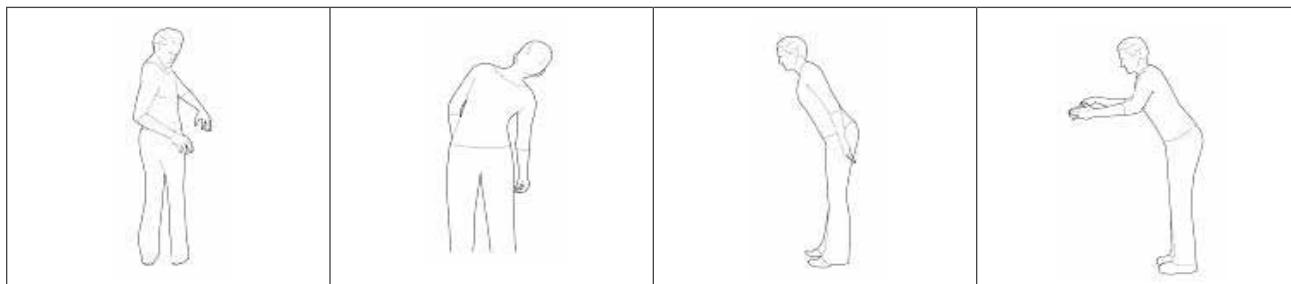
- Consider the business case of having a separate bagger
- Signage to inform public of what is acceptable and respect of the cashier

## TOOL KIT RESOURCES





### Business Case Resource Health and Safety Smart Planner

This tool will assist the owner/operator to calculate the benefits and costs of implementing an initiative.

### Sample Unacceptable Body Positions (taken from MDS Prevention Guidelines)



Working while standing with back bent forward, sideways or twisted more than 30 degrees for more than two hours total per day

			
Working with elbows at or above the shoulder level for more than two hours per day		Working with the neck bent forward or to the side more than 30 degrees for more than two hours per day	

**MSD Prevention Guidelines for the Service Sector** This guide was developed for the Service Sector and contains samples of questions for workplace inspections, surveys, and various assessment tools.







