

No: 261/24

23 July 2024

Our Ref: C1/24

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

“Better Backs Campaign” – “Move York Containers Safely – One at a Time” (Reminder)

The Health, Safety & Environment Department continues to receive enquiries from individual members and Workplace Safety Reps from various workplaces regarding LTB 163/24.

Disappointingly, the messages being received indicate that the CWU “Better Backs” Campaign has not been deployed in all workplaces and that the new posters and leaflets have not been circulated to all Units.

Members and WSRs also indicate the ongoing problem of other members and agency staff moving two York containers at a time in breach of the SSoW and secondly that managers are advising the workforce that “it’s their choice whether they move more than one York container at a time”, which is not correct and is in breach of the York Container Safe System of Work (V3.3).

However, there is a clear pattern developing across the UK that managers are conveying the same message ‘covertly’ and so encouraging the workforce to move two York containers at a time. This has been raised with the RMG Safety Director Liz Lloyd.

It’s important therefore that the CWU proactively gets the correct message across, countering some operational managers’ misinformation and deceitful activities by using the new campaign materials. Copies are attached.

You can either print the posters and leaflets locally in the Branch, Region or local printers or if that’s not possible, contact CWU HQ and we’ll get some printed for you.

Yours sincerely

Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer

CWU 150 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London, SW19 1RX
email: info@cwu.org Tel: 020 8971 7200 Fax: 020 8971 7300
General Secretary: Dave Ward

 [@DaveWardGS](https://twitter.com/DaveWardGS)  [Dave Ward CWU](https://www.facebook.com/DaveWardCWU)



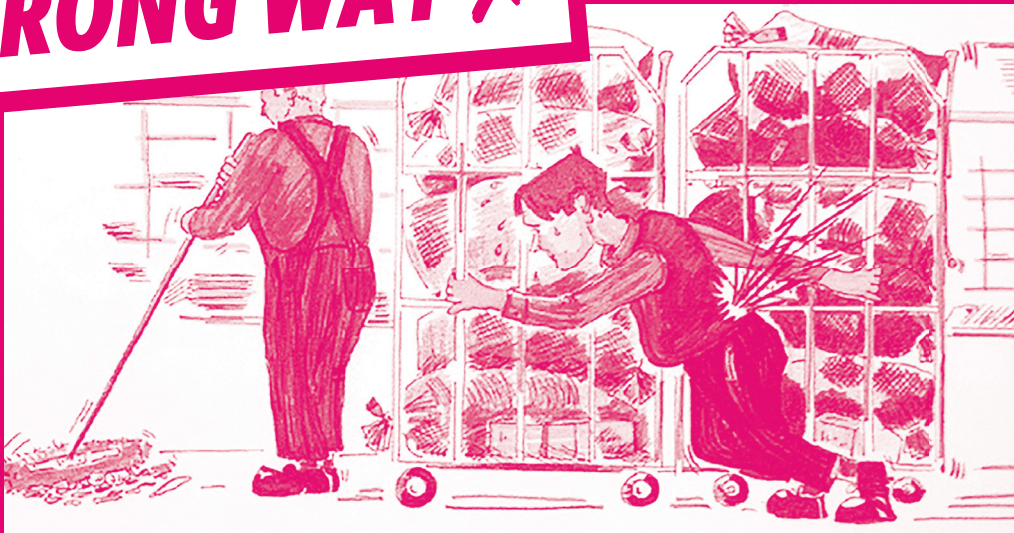
The communications union

BETTER BACKS CAMPAIGN

MOVING AND HANDLING REALLY MATTERS

MOVE YORK CONTAINERS SAFELY

WRONG WAY X



RIGHT WAY ✓



WORK RIGHT! ONLY MOVE ONE YORK AT A TIME.
AVOID BACK, JOINTS AND LIMB INJURIES - MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (MSDs).

Dave Joyce CWU National Health and Safety Officer.

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No: 163/2024

17 May 2024

Our Ref: C1/24

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

“Better Backs Campaign” – Move York Containers Safety - One at a Time
(Avoid back, joints and limb injuries, known as musculoskeletal disorders – MSDs)

“Better Backs – Move One York At A Time Campaign”

The Health, Safety and Environment Department has over recent months been receiving an increasing number of reports from CWU ASRs and Reps that Plant Managers/Persons In Charge (PICs) in Hubs, Distribution Centres and Mail Centres have been encouraging staff to ‘breach’ Royal Mail’s long-standing ‘**Mandatory**’ York Containers Safe System of Work V3.3 ‘the latest version’ by moving two York Containers at a time. There have also been ‘**false suggestions**’ that the Union has agreed to such a working practice **which is completely untrue**.

Royal Mail ‘Mandatory’ York Containers Safe System of Work V3.3

The Royal Mail ‘Mandatory’ York Containers Safe System of Work V3.3 for the operation and use of York Containers and Mini-York Containers states as follows:

- Page 3 **“This Safe System of Work must be followed at all times”**.
- Page 10 **“Only push one York Container at a time and push the York Container from the brake end using the yellow handles”**.
- Note: The moving of multiple, empty, nested York Containers (maximum three Yorks), one person activity and the moving of multiple empty assembled York Containers (maximum five Yorks), two-person activity are covered on pages 9 and 10 of the Safe System of Work.

Doctor Corinne Parsons – Royal Mail National Occupational Health and Ergonomics Manager

In 2019, Doctor Corinne Parsons, Royal Mail Group National Occupational Health and Ergonomics Manager carried out a Study and Risk Assessment of the impact of York Container work activities

in relation to the practice of moving two York Containers at once at the former National Distribution Centre. Her findings, conclusions and recommendations were as follows:

- Due to the twisted postures and high proportion of workers attributing aches and pains due to the practice of moving two York Containers together, **this activity should not be adopted as a normal working practice.**

Doctor Parsons' study of staff moving two York Containers at a time at the former NDC, found that:

- 68% of those surveyed reported pain and discomfort affecting muscles, joints, neck and back.
- 77% suffered this discomfort for more than three months.
- 95% said that they suffered constant or intermittent musculoskeletal pain.
- 35% said it affected their ability to work effectively.
- 25% of staff had taken time off due to the pain caused.

HSE Guidance

HSE Guidance published on the HSE website at the following link:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/food/roll-cages-wheeled-racks.htm> states as follows for all roll-cages, safe working advice is that workers should **“only move one roll container/cage at a time”**.

Campaign Materials

- Campaign Poster/Leaflet – PDF Copy attached Version 1 animated image
- Campaign Poster/Leaflet – PDF Copy attached Version 2 photo image

Hard copy printed versions of the above posters/leaflets can be ordered in A3, A4, A5 sizes from Louise Pietrzykowska (lpietrzykowska@cwu.org) in the Health, Safety and Environment department or downloaded and printed regionally.

ASR/WSR/Branch Reps Action

We are launching this Campaign to firstly put the record straight and to secondly put our members' health and safety first. Would all ASRs, WSRs, Branch and Regional Representatives please support the Campaign by displaying posters and distributing the leaflets to our members at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer