

## Improvement Evaluation “Tool”

As you evaluate possible improvement options, keep in mind the requirements that are most important in your particular workplace. Then, ask the following general questions for each improvement option under consideration:

Will this improvement:

- Reduce or eliminate most or all of the identified risk factors?
- Add any new risk factors that have not been previously identified?
- Be affordable for our organization (e.g., is there a simpler, less expensive alternative that could be equally effective)?
- Affect productivity or efficiency?
- Affect product or service quality?
- Provide a temporary or permanent “fix”?
- Be accepted by employees?
- Affect employee morale?
- Be able to be fully implemented (including training) in a reasonable amount of time?
- Affect the rate of pay or any collective bargaining agreements?

If you are thinking about new equipment for handling material, additional questions need to be answered. An evaluation will help to ensure that you choose the most appropriate piece of equipment to improve the “fit” between the task and the worker. For each improvement option under consideration, ask yourself if this particular piece of equipment will:

- Reach far enough to cover the work area?
- Handle the weight and shape of the product?
- Re-orient the load as needed for production (e.g., to empty or pour contents)?
- Be easy to load or unload?
- Require much force or energy to push it, steer it around corners, or stop it at the destination?
- Be heavy or large?
- Handle the load in a safe and controlled manner? Is the load held securely and is it well balanced? Will cables or chains allow too much movement compared with rigid links?
- Allow an adequate field of view for the operator?
- Slow workers down too much to meet production requirements?
- Interface with existing equipment and structures? Will weight-bearing columns, shelving, or other structures block the movement of the equipment?
- Need an additional power supply beyond what is currently in place?