



When Moving to Automation, Don't Leave Your Employee's Safety Behind

Insights

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In the world of automation, companies must take care to not forget about worker safety. Planning for worker safety while planning for automation helps the transition for both. In planning for worker safety, there are a few key areas to keep in mind.

Education and training for employees working around robots or other automated equipment is an important first step. Employees must understand their new roles as it pertains to automated equipment.

Employees should be trained on how to inspect automated equipment including robots. Proper inspection procedures are critical in keeping automated equipment functioning smoothly. Consider establishing inspection protocol prior to implementing any automated equipment, and consider whether certain equipment should be inspected every morning or after a certain number of usage hours or both. Employees should also be trained on how to spot abnormalities in robots or automated equipment to prevent breakdown. Preventative maintenance ultimately saves money by avoiding down time in automated equipment.

In implementing automated robots or other load-carrying automatous equipment, safety assessments must be done ahead of time to know and benchmark how much weight can be placed on moving robots. Too much weight may not only damage the robot, but also increases the risk to employees based on tipping over injuries.

Lastly, consider how employees and robots will move around areas together safely. Depending on the space, safety paint may be necessary to make robot paths visually distinct. Sensors for either your equipment or your workers can help decrease struck-by injuries in the workplace.

Automation can be implemented and used in many kinds of workplaces. While OSHA currently does not have regulations governing automation or robotics directly, OSHA offers general resources for helping to implement automation in the workplace. See <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/robotics/standards.html>. Thoughtful planning ahead of time can help ensure both a smooth transition and a continued safe work environment for your employees. Fisher Phillips workplace safety attorneys can assist you in your automation efforts.

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