

Media Release

SWISSPORT WINS IATA “INNOVATOR AWARD”

Swissport was recognized with the “Innovator Award 2019” at the IATA Ground Handling Conference in Madrid, today, for its role in developing the “LiftSuit”. The LiftSuit, a wearable exoskeleton, can help to prevent musculoskeletal injuries amongst baggage handlers.

Airport baggage handlers lift an average of five tons of baggage per day, often performing lifts in awkward positions inside an aircraft’s underfloor baggage compartment. With its commitment to set the industry benchmark in workers’ health and safety, Swissport continuously explores new ways to further improve the work conditions of its some 30,000 ramp and baggage handlers worldwide. With a group of ground handling staff and Auxivo, a specialist in the development of wearable exoskeletons, Swissport has been developing the LiftSuit over the past year. Several prototypes have been tested in realistic conditions at multiple Swissport locations to maximize the effectiveness and comfort of the LiftSuit.

Elastic elements allow the LiftSuit to store energy when a worker bends down. The energy is then released to support the workers when they pull the load back up. Laboratory results have shown that different muscle groups of a worker will experience a reduced activity of 10-30%, while wearing the LiftSuit. This leads to decreased muscle fatigue, which again decreases the risk of injury.

Alexandre Bolay, Vice President Global Quality, Health & Safety at Swissport International: “Injuries that occur during manual handling of heavy objects are a major concern for us. We are very pleased with the results of the new gear and the IATA recognition of Swissport as an industry leader in employee well-being. The LiftSuit is a fairly simple, yet effective way to support and protect our workers.”

The initiative is part of a global innovation program which was launched two years ago. Beyond the LiftSuit, Swissport is exploring other ways to improve manual handling safety. A team in Melbourne, Australia, is currently testing a wearable device, which measures body movements and quantifies the risk based on measuring displacement frequencies and force. The device is fitted with an alarm which can be set to immediately alert the wearer once they make a high-risk movement.

Swissport International AG, on behalf of more than 850 client-companies, provides best-in-class airport ground services for some 282 million passengers annually and handles approximately 4.8 million tons of air cargo at 122 warehouses worldwide. Several of its warehouses have been certified for Pharmaceutical Logistics by IATA’s CEIV. With a workforce of some 66,000 the world’s leading provider of airport ground services and air cargo handling is active at more than 300 airports in 50 countries on six continents. In 2018 the Group generated a consolidated operating revenue of EUR 2.99 billion.

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