

Duckwall-Pooley Fruit Company Earns GOSH Employee Safety Award in 2011

This award recognizes an employer who has made an outstanding contribution to occupational safety and health.

Repetitive motion injuries top the list of hazards at this Odell fruit-packing company. To tackle this challenge, Duckwall-Pooley has developed an innovative program that allows employees to receive complimentary massages during the first few weeks of the harvest season. The company also hires an on-site physical therapist to help identify best ergonomic practices.

Management involvement also sets this business apart. Owner Fred Duckwall personally helped solve an issue that arose regarding procedures in clearing jams. It is common to see the owner attend the company's mandatory daily stretching exercises. Managers have been known to recognize employees for safe behaviors while walking the production floor. As mentioned in the award nomination, "These seemingly simple actions, which I find to be commonly overlooked in the workplace, have resulted in great pride for employees and have created a positive safety culture."

The company's efforts are also reflected in their injury rate. The rate is 30 percent lower than the industry average, a trend that's held true for the past eight years.