



University of the
Sunshine Coast

Accident Research (USCAR)

Why manual handling training doesn't work: an air freight case study

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The problem

Manual handling injuries:

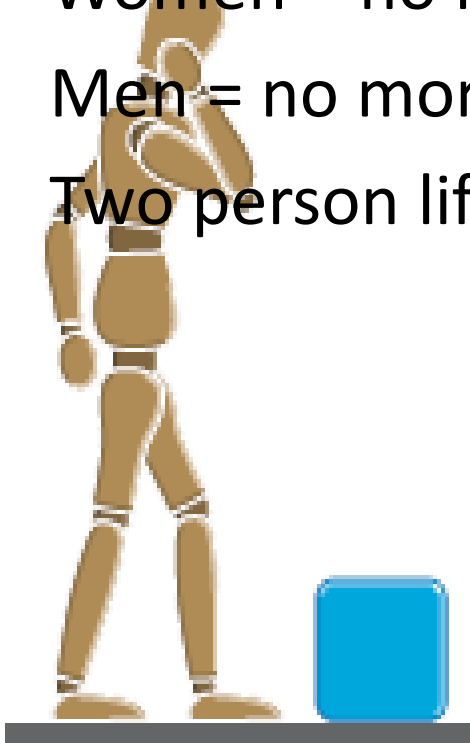
- 32% of all serious worker compensation claims.
- Most common cause of serious injury at work across all industries in Australia (e.g. agriculture, construction, health, manufacturing, mining, business, retail, transport and storage).

Common solution: Training and guidelines

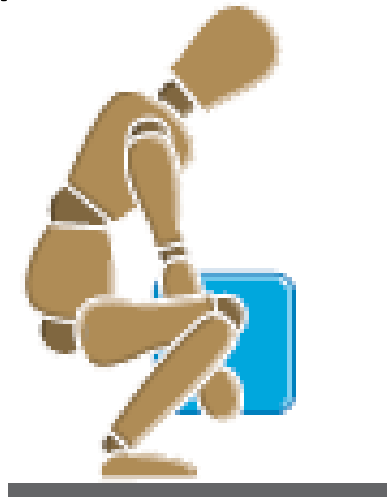
Women = no more than 15kg

Men = no more than 20kg

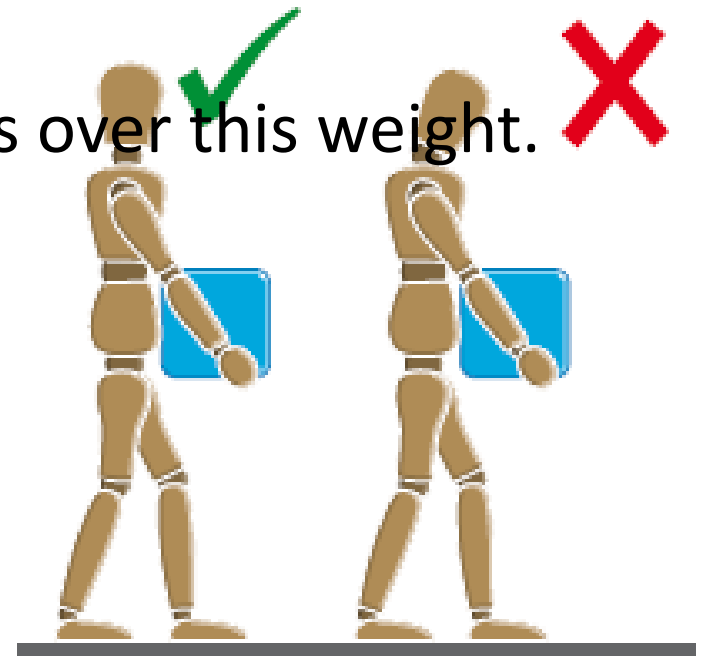
Two person lift required for items over this weight.



Think before lifting/handling.

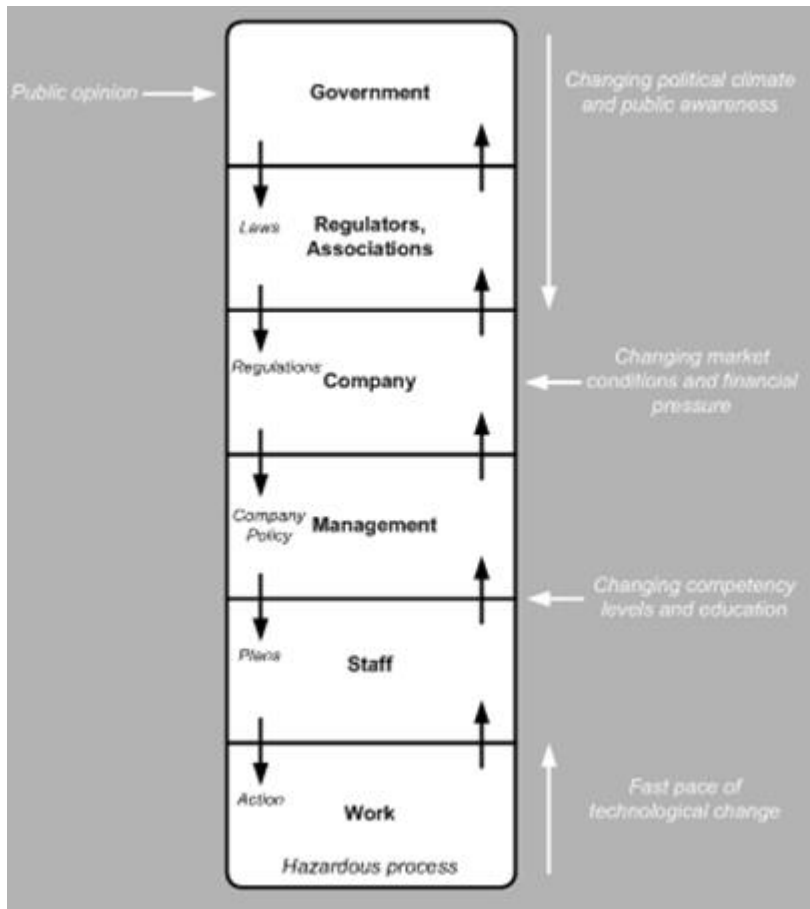


Get a good hold.



Keep the head up when handling.

A systems approach: Rasmussen's Risk Management Framework



Key ideas:

- Decisions and actions at all levels contribute to accidents.
- ‘Vertical integration’ is required to maintain safe operations.

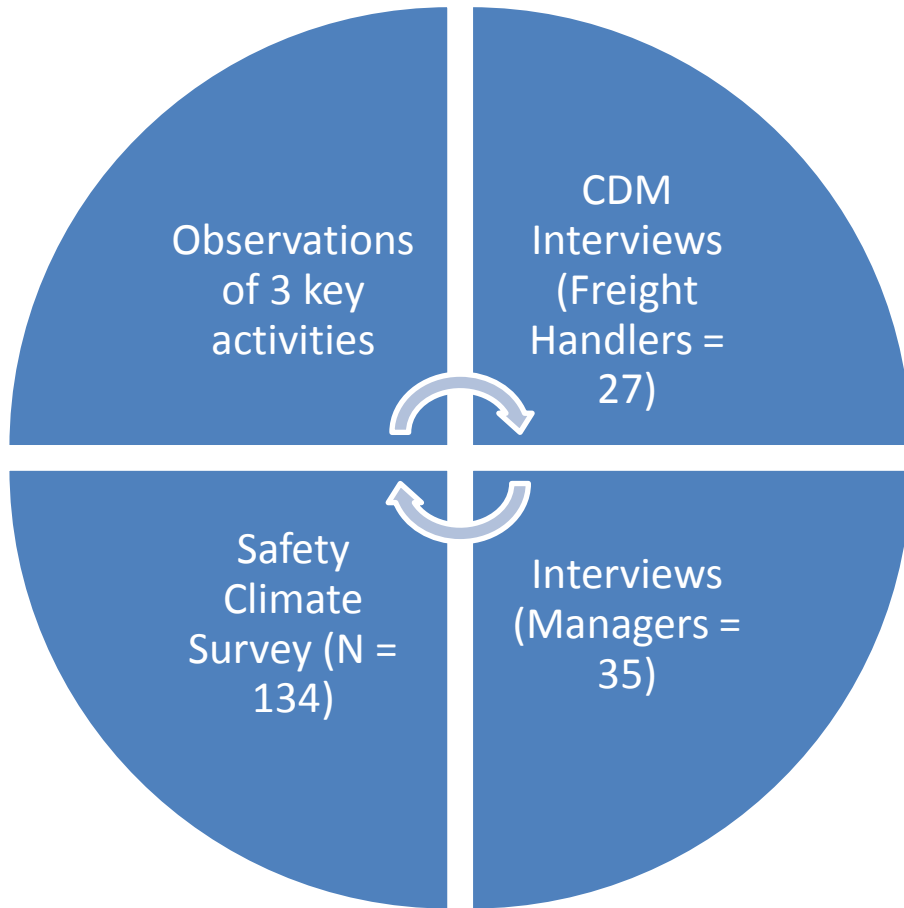
Aim

Examine the factors influencing safety during manual handling tasks from a systems perspective.

The company involved was Australian air Express - a major Australian international and domestic air freight handling service:

- Invested sig. \$\$\$ in manual handling training
- High rates of manual handling injuries
- High LTIR

Methods

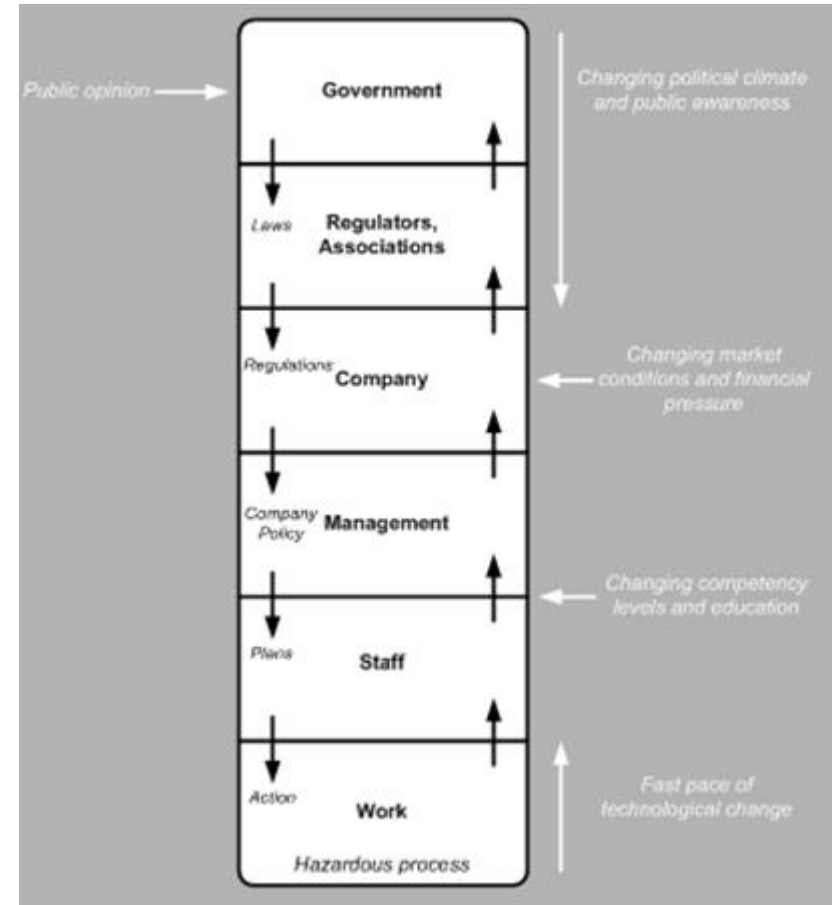


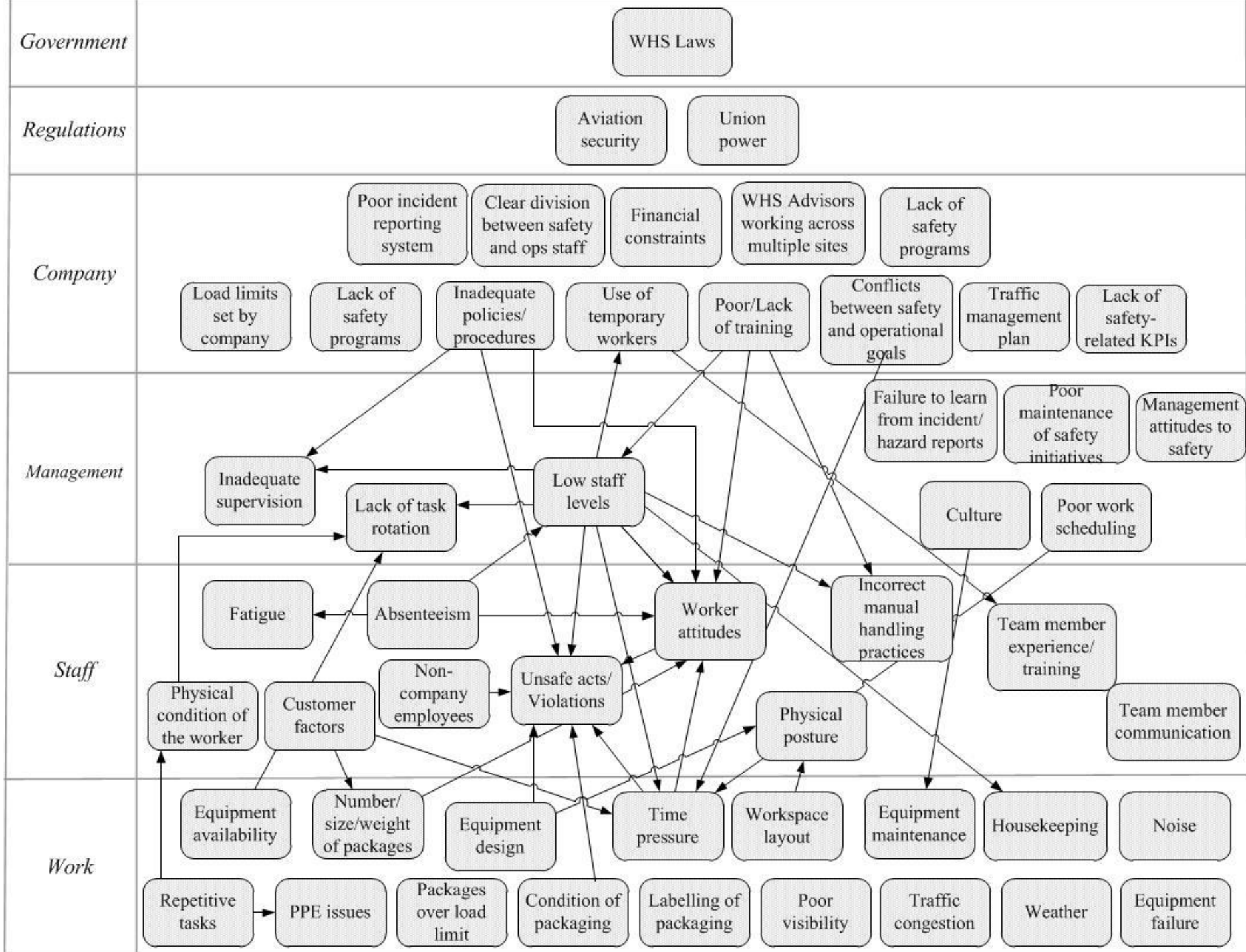
Manual handling activities:

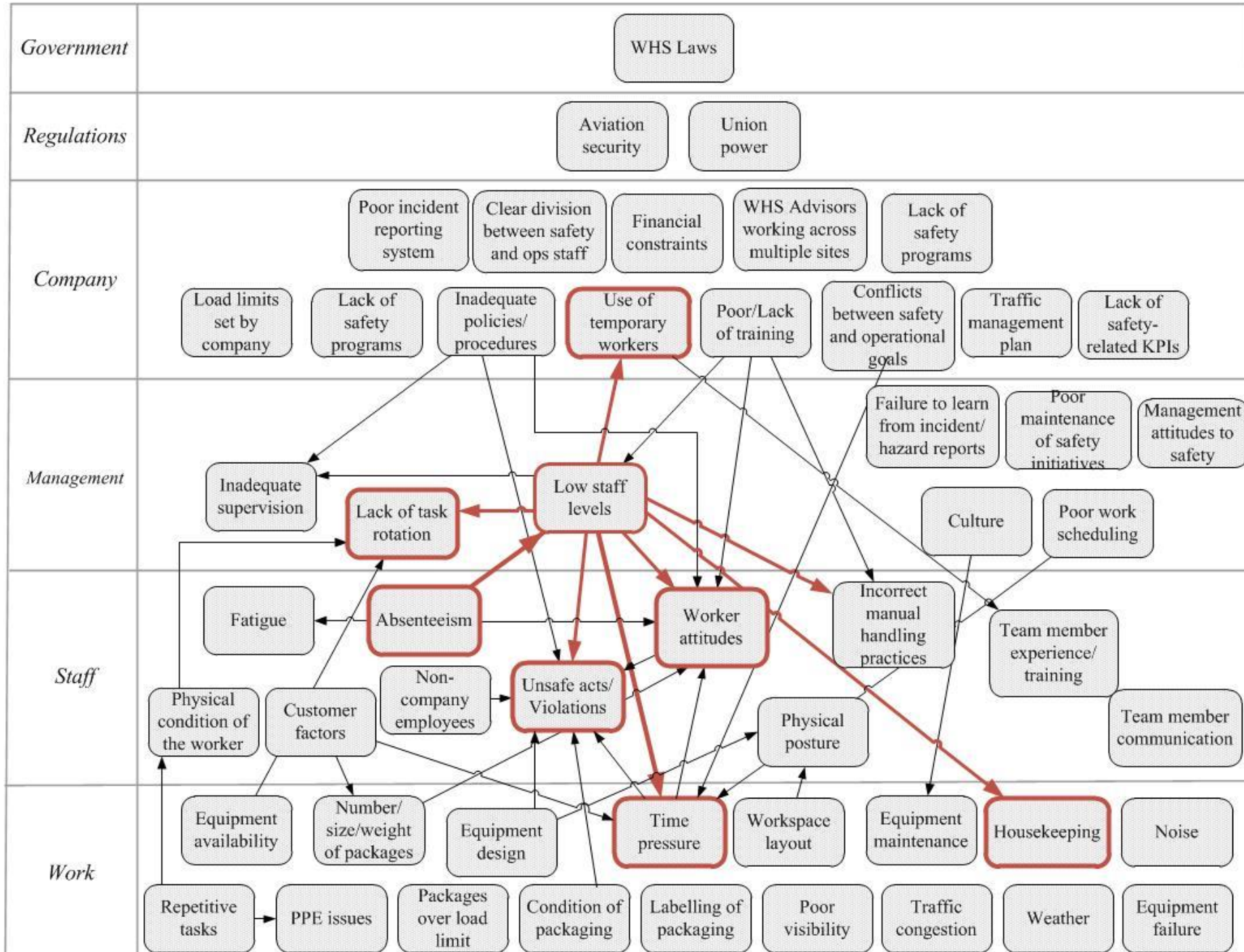
- In the warehouse, manually loading/unloading containers;
- On the tarmac, manually loading/unloading aircraft hold with packages; and
- On the tarmac, loading containers into aircraft.

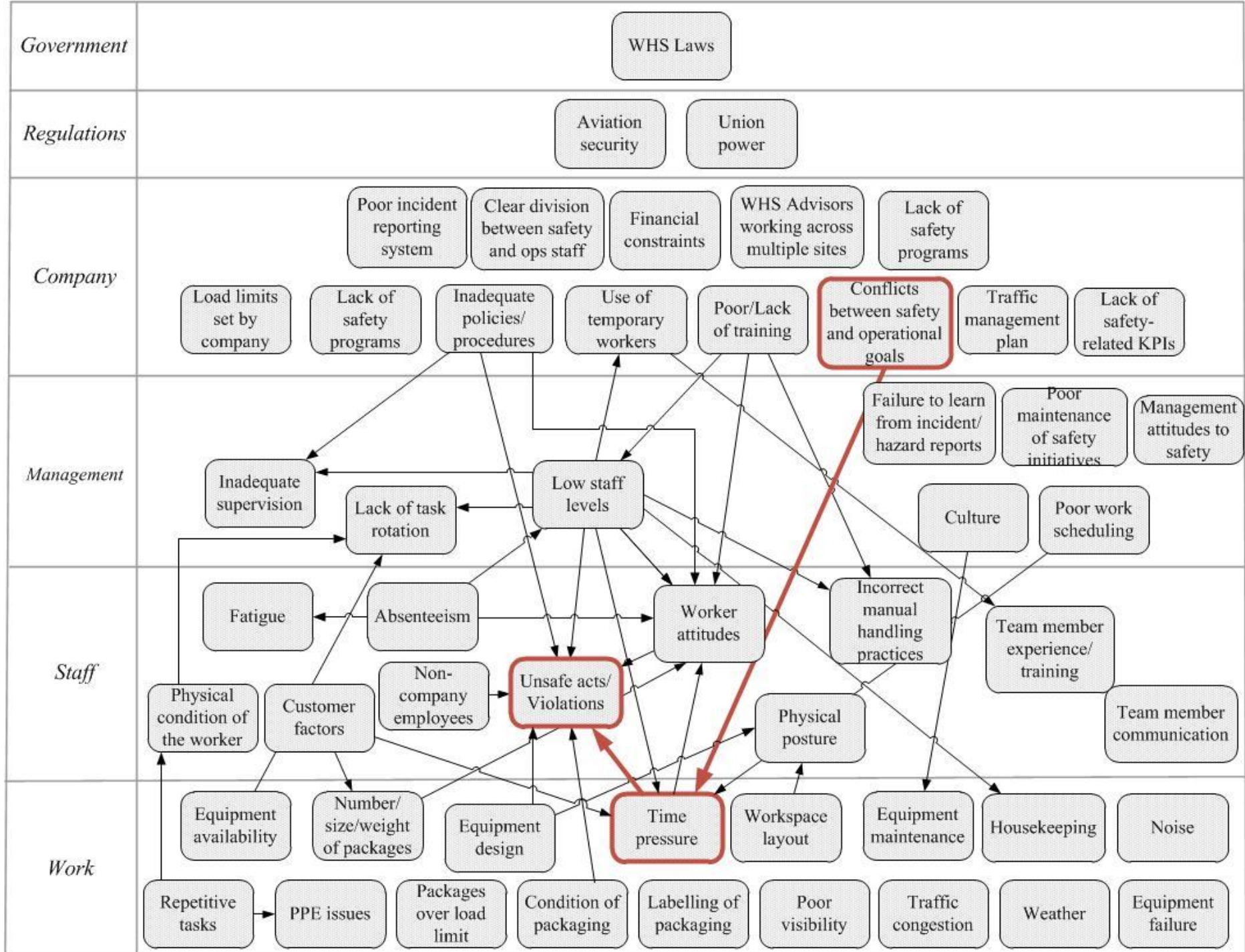
Thematic analysis

- Factors that shape decision-making and behaviour in the work context.
- Hazards inherent to the activity.
- Relationships between them.









Manual handling training doesn't work because....

- Worker's decision-making and behaviour is determined by a complex and dynamic system of factors in the workplace;
- To meet production goals/deadlines workers and supervisor sacrifice safety;
- Changes in management policies and practices are required to prevent future manual handling injuries.