



Gorbel Easy Arm® Helps Reduce Injuries And Lead To Increased Productivity

Industry:

Casting Manufacturer

Product:

Loading Sand Molds

The Problem:

Existing process was slow, cumbersome, and left workers with fatigue and back pain

The Solution:

Gorbel Easy Arm®



“We’re consistently seeing an increase of about 50 units per day, or about a 4% increase in productivity.”

When reviewing statistics from the previous year, the Safety Manager at an aluminum castings company in the northwest saw something he couldn’t ignore. “Of all the injuries and complaints we had, 47% of them were the result of poor ergonomics,” he said. “We wanted to take a big bite out of our injuries, so improving ergonomics was our primary target going into the New Year.”

One of the first work cells targeted was the sand mold loading area, where the molds typically weigh about 50 pounds. The workers of this cell, which included shorter female employees, complained that the existing process was slow, cumbersome, and left them with fatigue and back pain.

In place was a 500 lb capacity I-beam jib crane with an air-activated hoist. “People hated using it,” said the Safety Manager. “The hoist was slow and would become tangled. The crane was overkill for the application and would over-swing, making it tough to position the load. What would happen is people would get frustrated and stop using it and start lifting everything by hand.” The manual lifting was creating problems in strain and fatigue complaints, but also in cuts to the operator’s hands and arms. “Enough was enough; we needed to improve the application.”

While looking for a lifting solution, the company saw a demonstration of Gorbel’s Easy Arm. “It’s exactly what we needed,” he said. “We wanted something that was easier to use and the articulating arm gives us that. We also wanted the weightless (float mode) feature so our operators could move loads with their hands directly on the piece.”



The original order was for one Gorbels Easy Arm Q unit with a 165 pound capacity. However, when that unit arrived it took a slight detour.

“We had a different application in another area that we were looking at, and we basically shut it down because the situation was too dangerous. We essentially condemned it, and tore down the crane that was there.” In its place went the original 165 pound Easy Arm as a temporary solution.

The immediate response to the Easy Arm was so positive, the company decided the long term solution for this work cell was a 330 pound capacity Easy Arm Q. Once that order arrived, it allowed the original unit to be placed at the original work cell.

“That’s just one more thing I like about the Easy Arm. If our work process changes, I know I can move it to another area and use it again.”

With two Easy Arm units now in use, the primary goal of injury reduction was achieved. “We haven’t had any injuries since they were installed, and we’ve seen a huge drop in any complaints of fatigue of the elbow, wrist and back.”

An added bonus to the Easy Arm was an increase in productivity. “We’re consistently seeing an increase of about 50 units per day, or about a 4% increase in productivity. That wasn’t our primary goal, but we’re happy to see it.”