



This Safe Work Practice must be reviewed when the task, equipment, or materials change. At a minimum is reviewed once every year.

PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES

SAFE WORK PRACTICE

Practice:

Back Care and Lifting Techniques

Back injury is the leading lost work-time injury in the industry. Experience has shown that prevention programs can significantly reduce the incidence of back injury. There is no cookbook formula, however, that will solve all lifting problems.

Lifting objects that are too heavy is a problem in some jobs, but 90 percent of back injuries because of lifting occur while lifting light objects. Many back problems can be prevented or cured with exercise, weight control, and proper use of the back. The stresses placed on the back during manual lifting are due to a combination of the weight of the object being lifted and the lifting technique.

How to Prevent Back Injuries

The best way to prevent back injuries is to develop habits that reduce the strain placed on the back. There are some basic things you can do to help.

Avoid Lifting and twisting

Anytime you can spare your back the stress and strain of lifting and bending, do so! If you do not use your back like a lever, you avoid putting it under so much potentially damaging force.

Place objects up off the floor. If you can set something down on a table or other elevated surface instead of on the floor, do it so you will not have to reach down to pick it up again.

Raise/lower shelves. The best zone for lifting is between your shoulders and your waist. Put heavier objects on shelves at waist level, and lighter objects on lower or higher shelves.



Use carts and dollies to move objects, instead of carrying them yourself. (Remember that it is better on your back to push carts than it is to pull them.)

Ensure that proper equipment is available to do the lift.

Use Proper Lifting Procedures

You cannot always avoid lifting, but there are ways to reduce the amount of pressure placed on your back when you do so. By bending the knees, you keep your spine in a better alignment, and you essentially take away the lever principle forces. Instead of using your back like a crane, you allow your legs to do the work.

Follow these steps when lifting:

1. Take a balanced stance with your feet shoulder-width apart. One foot can be behind the object and the other next to it.
2. Squat down to lift the object, but keep your heels off the floor. Get as close to the object as you can.
3. Use your palms (not just your fingers) to get a secure grip on the load. Make sure you will be able to maintain a hold on the object without switching your grip later.
4. Lift gradually (without jerking) using your leg, abdominal, and buttock muscles

REMEMBER: Do not lift over 55 lbs. Bend your knees, and use your legs to do the work. Get help if the shape is too awkward or the object is too heavy for you to lift and move by yourself!

Use the attached calculator to identify safe or hazard lifting weights.

Employee Signature: _____
Date: _____

Manager Signature: _____
Date: _____