

LIFTING & MATERIAL HANDLING SAFETY (ALL OTHERS)

OBJECTIVES

- Staff will re-visit how back injuries occur
- Staff will re-visit safe lifting and materials handling techniques
- Staff will re-visit back injury prevention practices

Lifting injuries are one of the leading causes of employee injuries; therefore, we will revisit this issue to protect employees. Back injuries are a major cause of work-related disability and the second most common cause of lost workdays; therefore, we are revisiting lifting and material handling safety. According to the National Safety Council, 400,000 workers suffer new back injuries each year. One out of five workers experiencing a disabling injury suffers from a back injury. Generally, these injuries are the result of improper lifting methods. These injuries occur everywhere in government, not just to maintenance staff.

Preventing back injuries begins with a good safety attitude and thinking about personal safety before performing a lift. Safe lifting techniques, team lifting, and utilization of lifting devices are all effective methods that keep your back healthy and free from injury.

We all lift objects on a daily basis, sometimes-light incidental objects and sometimes-heavy cumbersome loads. Regardless of what we lift or how often we lift, we can injure our back at anytime with any size load. The golden rule is to never lift a load improperly, and if necessary, use a lifting device, or team approach.

COMMON CAUSES OF LIFTING INJURIES

- Lifting a heavy or cumbersome load by yourself.
- Employing improper lifting technique puts too much strain on your back.
- Holding a load away from the body when lifting. The closer a load is to our body, the less strain is placed on our back.
- Bending from the waist rather than lifting with our legs.
- Twisting and turning while lifting.
- Carrying a load down stairs or on a slope.

Many back problems are caused by a gradual degeneration of the discs rather than one traumatic injury event. This is important to remember because when you first lift incorrectly, you will not generally feel pain for sometime; however, the damage is done.

PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUE

(Demonstrate the proper lifting technique and/or have an attendee demonstrate.)

- Plan the Lift
- Executing the Lift
- Traveling With the Load
- Setting Down the Load
- Other Safe Lifting Techniques

TEAM APPROACH: Never try to lift a heavy or cumbersome load by yourself. If the load is heavy (45 pounds or more) or cumbersome, use a team approach and get help. There's nothing wrong with asking for help. The time you might save is insignificant compared to the injury and pain and suffering potential.

LIFTING DEVICES: Regardless of the size or weight of a load, it is always a good practice to use a lifting device, e.g., cart, dolly, or hand truck. When using a lifting device, you eliminate any chance of injuring your back from lifting.

POLICY

Re-visit all organizational policies and procedures related to lifting and materials handling.

CLOSING

- *Encourage discussion about this presentation, and proper lifting and materials handling techniques.*
- *Discuss what steps employees can take to prevent back injuries.*