



LIFTING SAFETY

Back injuries are one of the most common injuries. With this Toolbox Talk we will address proper lifting techniques, how to reduce the risk of a back injury and some other general safety tips.

Preparation:

- Ensure that you are wearing proper clothing and PPE
- Steel toe shoes should always be worn when lifting heavy items
- Gloves are also recommended when lifting certain objects
- Stretch before you attempt to lift a heavy object or at beginning of shift
- If possible, store materials at waist height to reduce the strain on your back
- Have materials delivered as close to final destination as possible
- Assess the object you are going to be lifting
- Determine the weight of the object before lifting
- Determine best place to grip the object
- Ensure that your travel path is free of slipping and tripping hazards
- Know your own lifting restrictions and capabilities

Get Help:

- Use carts, dollies, forklifts and hoists to move materials
- When lifting a load more than 50 lbs., get help from another worker
- Use carrying tools with handles to carry odd-shaped loads

Proper Lifting Techniques:

- Have your feet spread about shoulders-width apart.
- Your feet should be close to the object.
- Get a firm grip on the object.
- Keep your back straight and elbows close to your body.
- Keeping your back straight and head up, straighten your legs to lift object
- At the same time tighten your stomach muscles to provide back support (Don't hold your breath while doing this)
- While carrying the object DO NOT twist or bend at the waist, move your feet and legs when turning.
- Keep the load as close to your body as possible
- To set the object down, use the same technique used to lift the object

Other Useful Safety Tips:

- Take your time! You are more likely to be injured when you are tired or cold
- Lift as smoothly as possible, try not to "jerk" the lift



Group Discussion Topics:

- Has anyone had a back injury? How could this have been prevented?
- Are there common objects which you find yourself lifting frequently? Do you have specific procedures for lifting these objects?
- Do you have access to material handling equipment? If no, can you obtain them?