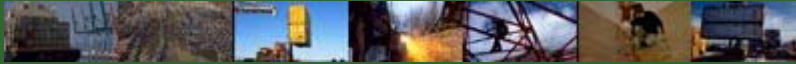




Safety Meeting Outline



SMO 05-0602

LOWER BACK PAINS

By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control

A 40-year-old mechanic bent over to pick up a tool one morning and experienced a sudden pain in the lower back area. He continued to work, but as the day progressed he was unable to bend over and had considerable discomfort. After three days he was back at work but still felt some discomfort. Two weeks later, he bent over again and the back pain returned. After a week at home the pain subsided and he returned to work. Six months later the pain returned again causing him to see a physician who could find nothing specifically wrong with him upon examination. This type of injury is not an unusual case. Work related lower back problems are common and often lead to persistent or recurring pain for which no specific cause can be readily identified without further testing.

Low back pain is one of the oldest and most common problems faced by many workers today. An estimated 80% of the working population will experience low back pain during their working career resulting in many lost workdays each year.

In spite of how common this affliction is, the specific causes and precise treatment are unknown in some cases. Researchers who have extensively studied lower back pain have observed changes in the spine of workers starting around age 40 that seem to reduce the tolerance to heavy workloads. If you are over 40 years of age you need to take better care of your back than when you were younger. When you need to lift something, stop and size up the load first. If it looks too heavy get someone to help you lift it and avoid twisting your back when lifting as much as you can. Whenever possible, use a material handling aid such as: hand trucks, dollies, or other mechanical equipment to minimize the need for manual lifting and handling.

Fortunately, this type of non-specific lower back pain is usually self-limiting and resolves itself in 90% of cases. About 40% of these problems disappear by themselves in a week, 80% in 3 weeks, and 90% within 6 weeks. The rate of recurrence is high however. Some estimates range up to 90%, so the best course of action is to prevent the injury from occurring in the first place and stay physically fit.

Back pain may be brought on by a sedentary life style that allows the muscles that support the spine to become weak and easily fatigued. If you have reoccurring back problems, it may be time to start thinking about a regular exercise program. However, before you start an exercise program however, check with your physician, particularly if you have pain now, to make sure that it will not make your condition worse. If your doctor gives you the OK, start out gradually and avoid muscle fatigue that will cause unnecessary soreness. When you start an exercise routine, resolve to keep at it every day. If you stay in shape by exercising regularly, you are less likely to become disabled by this pain that eventually affects 80% of all employees to some extent over their working career.

Lift Smart and Stay in Good Physical Condition.

SAFETY MEETING AGENDA

DEPARTMENT/JOB SITE: _____ MEETING DATE: _____

1. **Open Meeting & Present safety topic:** _____
2. Read minutes from previous meeting.
3. **Persons present:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. **Old Business** – Status of previous recommendations. Discuss pending old business if any.

5. **Accidents** – Discuss accidents and near misses that have occurred since the last meeting. Brief summary of accidents to date by number and type. Note any trends. Discuss corrective action taken, or needed. Concentrate on accident causes to make everyone more aware.

6. **Inspection Reports** – Report on findings and recommendations of any inspection reports made since last meeting.

7. **New Business** – Solicit employee suggestions. Discuss new procedures, changes to company safety policy, etc.

TIME MEETING STARTED: _____ TIME FINISHED: _____

MEETING CHAIRED BY: _____ TITLE: _____