



Safety Meeting Outline



SMO 98-0602

BENDING, TWISTING & REACHING

By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control

Injuries from manual material handling, especially strains and sprains of the back, arms and shoulders, are the most frequent cause of industrial insurance claims. Overall, material handling accounts for one-third of all workplace accidents. In many types of operations this is the source of more than 75% of injuries. The major cause of these injuries is unnecessary or excessive body motions while bending, twisting and reaching. In many cases, these strains and sprains can be easily prevented. The following are a few techniques for you to consider.

Bending:

Many work tasks in industry involve unnecessary bending, which results from the improper design of the workstation, a poor job layout, or inadequate or unavailable material handling equipment. The workstation or area should be designed so the work is performed in the mid-range of the body, i.e., from waist to shoulder height within a 16” semicircle in front of the body.

Often this can be accomplished simply by placing a table under the material being worked on, raising the work level so it can be performed in an upright position. Stacking pallets beneath materials can also raise the work level to the mid-range. The use of a load leveling devices such as a lift table, work dispenser or other similar mechanical aid will also accomplish this goal. If the work level cannot be changed, sometimes lowering the worker, such as in the grease pit of a garage, will accomplish the goal of bringing the task into the mid-range of the body.

Twisting and Reaching:

Elimination of unnecessary twisting or reaching can also be accomplished by finding ways to keep the work or materials in the mid-range. For example, while changing a light bulb or working above floor level, place the ladder so that the task will be performed in *front* of the body instead of twisting to the side. This demonstrates how easy it can be to minimize or eliminate many twisting or reaching tasks.

Providing adequate workspace so the *whole body* can turn, instead of just the upper torso, is another good technique. For example, if a pallet of material must be placed behind the worker, provide enough room so that the worker must take one or two steps when moving material. When the pallet of material is placed close to and directly behind the workstation, the tendency is to twist around to pick up the material. Turning the whole body is safest for the back.

Problem Solve For Creative Solutions:

Make a list of tasks you or co-workers perform outside of the mid-range of the body and then list simple solutions that will eliminate the unnecessary bending and reaching. The most creative and practical ideas will probably come from the employees who handle the materials—so everyone should get involved with identifying both the problems and the solutions.



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: _____