



Safety Meeting Outline



SMO 99-0601

BACK INJURY PREVENTION-PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY

By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control

It is estimated that 8 out of 10 Americans will eventually suffer a back injury or have some type of back pain. Back injuries are often difficult to treat and can result in lengthy and costly rehabilitation. It is important to stay healthy and in good shape so that we can do our jobs better and safer.

The specific cause of back pain is not always known. Most authorities believe that lower back pain is caused by changes in the spine, many times as a person gets older. Lifting heavy loads on and off the job are thought to merely trigger the occurrence of symptoms. When activities involve strenuous work such as, frequent handling of materials, frequent bending or twisting, or handling of heavy loads, the probability of injury increases.

In an effort to minimize the chance of back injury and to help eliminate unnecessary hazards, the following basic principles are useful to guide the design of everyday lifting tasks:

- Use proper lifting techniques when manually lifting material. Spread your feet slightly apart, bend your knees, keep your back arched and the load close. Grip the object with a firm grasp. Use your strong leg muscles instead of the weaker and smaller back muscles to bring you and the load to a standing position. Make the lift under control; don't make quick jerky moves.
- Move material once. Plan out jobs so the same material is not lifted and lowered at different times.
- Use the force of gravity when possible. Convert lifting/lowering tasks into pushing/pulling.
- Avoid extreme body joint movement.
- Make the job fit the worker. Don't plan for only an "average" person to do the job.
- Avoid static muscle loading (exertion without movement).
- Give support to the body.
- Don't complete tasks that require extreme twisting or reaching behind you.
- Plan lifts so that they take place between knuckle and shoulder height.
- Use tools or personal protective equipment to reduce vibration.
- Listen to the worker/let the worker have a say in the safe way to lift.

Following these principles can help to reduce job related back injuries and back pain. Using good lifting and working techniques can also improve production and reduce job related stress.

Good ergonomic job design, including proper workplace layout, appropriate use of mechanical lifting aids, appropriate seat design, optimum work levels, sit/stand workstations, and matching object weights to human capabilities can go far toward reducing low back injuries. Ergonomic job design can reduce work related back injuries by up to 33% according to some sources.

When objects must be lifted manually, proper lifting techniques must be used. However, good equipment design and pre-job planning should be the first approach attempted in the prevention of back injuries. Eliminating the need to manually lift material also eliminates the possibility of injuring your back while doing so.



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: _____