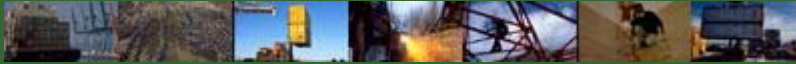




Safety Meeting Outline



SMO 06-0501

BACK CARE FOR PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS

By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control

Why is back pain a problem for professional drivers? Bus and truck drivers are a population that suffers a higher than average incidence of back pain and injury. Some of this involves factors that are an inherent part of the work, while some involves lack of knowledge. Since professional drivers usually travel alone, without supervision, it is often difficult to get them together in one place for back care training, although this is an important need. Most truck drivers know more about their carburetors than they do about their own spine. Yet research shows they are, on the average, four times more likely to have a herniated disc than most people, unless they learn to understand why driving can be hard on the back and what they must do to prevent problems.

The sitting position seriously distorts normal spinal curves and, if maintained for long periods of time, can strain muscles, ligaments and discs of either the upper or lower spine. This does not occur overnight, but as a cumulative issue. Unless the vehicle seat has built-in lumbar support, a pad, cushion, or rolled up towel should be placed to maintain the lower back curve. Over time, lack of movement - or "dynamic" muscle effort - results in poor blood circulation to the back. The reduced circulation causes an accumulation of waste products, which leads to discomfort or pain.

Vibration Research shows that even low-grade vibration is transferred from the vehicle seat, through the buttocks and pelvis to the spine. Over time, this can have a damaging effect upon tissues of the lower back.

Lifting Finally, the "straw that breaks the camel's back" is often a heavy or awkward lift at the end of a long trip or working day. Strained tissues are less capable of load-bearing, so when drivers reach their destination and load or unload materials, fatigued back muscles or ligaments are highly vulnerable to injury. Great care in lifting must be taken at this time.

The most important preventative strategy, aside from well-designed seats, is to get out of the vehicle often, stretch, walk, and use large leg muscles to pump and circulate blood into pelvic and back muscles. Drivers on a tight schedule will not likely take this trouble unless they are educated on the value of back care efforts. Some employers get cooperation by suggesting that an occasional "exercise break" helps prevent back injury in professional drivers. Whatever message or motive works, "use it or lose it" is still the key.

Use back support belts properly. If you wear a back support belt to help prevent injuries during lifting and loading activities, be sure to loosen it occasionally as instructed. This helps prevent weakening of abdominal muscles and allows blood circulation in the lower back area.

If you have a "working back" - take good care of it!

The materials contained in this outline are not intended as legal, business, or risk management advice to any party, and in no way represent advice with respect to specific practices of any party or any undertaking by SEABRIGHT INSURANCE COMPANY in any regard. SEABRIGHT has not confirmed or verified the accuracy or correctness of such materials or any information on which they may be based and makes no representation or warranty as to the content of this outline or its accuracy, or its appropriateness or its suitability for any particular reader, situation or practice, or as to conformance with applicable laws or regulations. Readers should conduct and rely on their own investigations before acting upon or otherwise using such materials. Questions about this material should be addressed in writing to the loss control department, SeaBright Insurance Company, Suite 1600, 2101 4th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98121, or by email to losscontrol@sbic.com.



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: _____