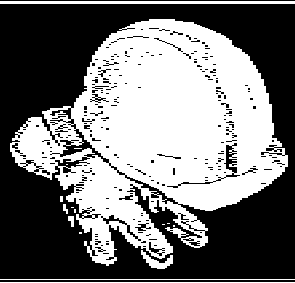
TRAINING GUIDE

BACKS & LIFTING



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Before you begin the meeting...

☐ *Does this topic relate to the work the crew is doing? If not, choose another topic.*

☐ *Did you read this Training Guide and fill in the blanks where the* ___ *appears? (To find the information you need, look over the Safety Walkaround Checklist for this topic.)*

☐ *Did you bring a large object (such as an empty box) so you can demonstrate lifting techniques at the meeting?*

Begin: Watch your back! Abusing it can cause painful and even permanent injuries. Construction workers miss work because of back injuries more than any other reason. Your back can slowly get worse or can suddenly "go out." Either way, the results are the same—a lot of pain and you're off work! So let's talk about how to **protect** your back.

You or a crew member may want to add a personal story about back injuries.

ASK THE CREW THESE QUESTIONS:

After each question, give the crew time to suggest possible answers. Use the information following each question to add points that no one mentions.

1. What are some common causes of back injuries in construction?

- Lifting materials that are too heavy or unstable
- Lifting objects to or from awkward locations (for example, placing overhead or lifting from the ground)
- Repetitive twisting, bending, reaching overhead, or lifting
- Working for long periods in a bent over or strained position
- Falling
- Tripping over debris
- Wearing tool belts that are too heavy
- Lifting or doing any physical labor when you haven't "warmed up."

2. How can you avoid back injuries on the job?

The best way is to plan the job to reduce the need for lifting, twisting, bending, or reaching overhead. Change how the job is done, or change the tools you use. Here are some examples.

- Store materials off the ground, so you don't have to bend so much to lift.
- Store materials where there is space to lift them safely, without reaching or twisting.
- Have materials delivered close to where they will be used.
- Split up large loads into smaller, lighter loads.
- Change the setup of the job. (Perhaps adjust the angle and height of work surfaces.)
- Use a manual lifting or carrying device (like a dolly, hand truck, pry bar, or hook).
- Use a mechanical lifting device (like a fork lift, hoist, crane, or block and tackle).
- Use tools that minimize bending and reaching (like tools with longer handles).
- Make sure walkways are kept clear to allow the use of material handling devices like carts and dollies.

3. Step-by-step, how do you lift a heavy object safely? Tell me how to do it.

Remember that proper lifting techniques cannot protect you if the object is too heavy, awkward to hold, or cannot be held close to the body.

> *The instructor should demonstrate the steps below. Use an empty box or something similar (not an object that's very heavy). Have the crew suggest correct techniques for lifting the object and for setting it down. Demonstrate these techniques as the crew instructs you.*

- Face the object. Place one foot behind the object and the other foot beside it.
- Bend your knees but keep your back straight. Grip the object firmly with both hands.
- Bring the object close to your body. Keep your chin, elbows, and arms tucked in tight. Keep your body weight directly over your feet.
- Lift with your legs.
- Do the same process in reverse when you set the object down.
- Avoid any twisting motions.

4. What about back support belts? Are they a good way to protect yourself?

Most research says that back belts will not protect you from back injuries.

- They can give you a false sense of security, so you try to lift too much weight.
- Leaving the belt tightened for long periods can actually increase your chances of being injured when you have to lift without the belt.
- People who wear belts have more upper back injuries.

- Belts can be hazardous for people with high blood pressure.
- A belt should never be a substitute for designing the job to minimize manual material handling. Instead of a belt, use mechanical lifting when possible. If you must lift manually, proper lifting techniques protect you better than a belt

5. What are some tasks on this job that could be bad for your back? And what can we do to make these tasks safer?

Back Hazards	Solutions
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. According to Cal/OSHA, we must have a written Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) for the site. Back and lifting hazards are included in our IIPP. Do you know what our IIPP says about them?

- The company will inspect the job site for all health and safety hazards, including back and lifting hazards.
- We will take steps to reduce any hazards, where feasible.
- We will investigate accidents that cause back injury.
- We will provide needed safety equipment, like manual and mechanical lifting devices.
- We will maintain safety equipment in good condition, and keep it close to the work being done.
- We will give you training.

CAL/OSHA REGULATIONS

Explain: The safety measures we've talked about are included in our company's Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP), as required by Cal/OSHA. At this time, there are few specific Cal/OSHA regulations on back hazards or lifting. However, Cal/OSHA did recently adopt a new ergonomics standard designed to reduce repetitive motion injuries. On any construction job, if there has been more than one ergonomic injury within a year to workers doing the same task, the company must take steps to identify and correct these hazards. We must also provide relevant training. I have a Checklist of recommended safety measures. If you'd like to know more, see me after the meeting.

COMPANY RULES

(Only if applicable.) We have some additional company rules to prevent back injuries.

Discuss company rules: _____

_____

COMMENTS FROM THE CREW

Ask: Do you have any other concerns about back injuries or lifting? Do you see any problems on our job? *(Let the steward answer first, if there is one.)*

What about other jobs you've worked on? Have you had any experience with back injuries or lifting that might help us work safer on this job?

SIGN-OFF FORM
BACKS & LIFTING

Date Presented: _____ By: _____

Project Name/No.: _____ Location: _____

NAMES OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED THIS SAFETY MEETING

PRINTED NAME	*SIGNATURE*