



MATERIAL HANDLING PROPER LIFTING

Provided by Wendell Macnab
Association Coordinator

Whether in the office or in the field, many jobs in most professions encounter some level of handling different materials. Warehouse employees utilize a variety of forklifts, hand trucks, and other equipment to move merchandise. Office personnel will occasionally lift heavy files or boxes of paper. On a job site there are many oddly shaped items that are moved from one location to another. While most employees are mindful of safety while using equipment, many may not be so safety focused when they are simply lifting or carrying.

In almost all industries, strains and sprains caused by lifting and carrying account for 20 percent of reported back injuries. That also represents nearly 30 percent of all workers' compensation claims. Proper lifting techniques and avoiding mistakes before and after a lift can help reduce or prevent back injuries.

"Lifting is an action that affects virtually every industry to some degree," said Claudia Baker, Loss Control Manager at [SCF Arizona](#). She continued, "Injuries can be avoided by assessing what is to be lifted, by whom and to where the lifted item is being carried. By considering these things before the lift is performed, you can minimize or eliminate unnecessary exposure to injuries."

Share these tips with your employees:

Lifting Dos:

- Size up the load to determine if you will need help. Slide loads when possible.
- Wear sturdy boots or shoes with nonslip soles.
- Get a firm footing, then part your feet and place one foot slightly in front of the other.
- Keep the load close to your body and directly in front of you.
- Keep your back as straight as possible. Bend your knees and lift with your legs.
- Grip the object well. Use handles, when possible, and make sure gloves fit properly.
- Avoid lifting loads higher than chest level.
- Lift in a smooth, controlled manner. Don't jerk the load or twist your body.

Lifting Don'ts:

- Curving the back forward while grabbing the object, then lifting by straightening the back
- Keeping the legs straight and bending at the hips to lift the item
- Twisting the back while lifting, holding or carrying the item
- Holding the object away from the body
- Lifting a heavy object above shoulder level
- Lifting an object that is too heavy

If you would like more information on workplace safety please contact your Association Coordinator.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Tucson Safety Works
SCF Arizona Safety Expo
Tuesday & Wednesday
October 7-8, 2008
Registration & details:
www.regonline.com/tucsonscf

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