

Safety Meeting
Reduce Back Injuries



Company: _____ Presenter: _____ Date: _____

It may sound rather ridiculous to ask, "Do you know how to lift safely?" You have been lifting things all your life, and your immediate answer would probably be, "Of course I know how to lift." The key word in the question however, is safely. Every year a great many construction workers suffer pain and have to take time off work because of lifting injuries; some are even permanently disabled.

Back injuries are caused by a variety of factors. A load that's too heavy could certainly cause an injury. Another common error is under-estimating the weight of the object to be lifted. Repetitive actions such as lifting many light or moderately heavy objects can also have long-term effects. But lifting incorrectly, whether the load is heavy or light, large or small, is the primary cause of back injuries.

Simple as it may sound, there is a right way and a wrong way to lift. Let's review the techniques of lifting safely. When you lift and/or carry any material, follow these steps:

- * Be sure and that you have a clear path to your destination.
- * Face the object with your feet about shoulder-width apart, one foot slightly behind the other.
- * Bend your knees and squat down; keep your back straight.
- * Get a firm grip on the object.
- * Straighten your legs gradually to an erect position.
- * If you have to carry the object, keep it close to your body, as near to your own center of balance as possible.
- * When you turn, do so slowly, and with your whole body, not just with your upper body.
- * At your destination, stop with your feet about shoulder-width apart.
- * Lower the load by squatting down, keeping your back straight until you release the load.

Get help if a load is too heavy or cumbersome to handle by yourself. Knowing how to lift safely won't do any good and won't prevent injuries unless you use that knowledge every time you have to lift an object.

SAFETY REMINDER: When handling heavy loads regularly, use mechanical assistance.

Employee Signatures
