

## SAFE LIFTING

### Suggested Guidelines

Most back injuries are the result of improper lifting techniques. The worst lifting situations occur when the body is extended over the load. Keep the back straight to shift the weight of the load being lifted onto powerful leg muscles, thus reducing the lever effect caused when the body is extended over the load.

- \* Keep in good physical condition. Difficult lifting tasks should not be attempted if not accustomed to vigorous exercise.
- \* Think before lifting. Make certain there is adequate space and clear aisle ways. Also, plan for a place to set the load down.
- \* Maintain a good grip on the load by using the palms of the hands.
- \* Lift with the load close to the body. The closer the load is to the spine, the less force it exerts on the back. This is one of the most important rules in lifting.
- \* Test the load before handling it. If it appears to be too heavy or bulky, get help or some type of mechanical aid.
- \* Place feet close to the load. The feet should be far enough apart for stability, have one foot slightly ahead of the other and pointed in the direction of movement.
- \* Tighten stomach muscles. Abdominal muscles support the spine when lifting, offsetting the force it exerts on the back.
- \* Lift with your legs. The stronger leg muscles are better suited for lifting than the weaker back muscles.
- \* Keep the back straight, head up whether lifting or putting down the load. Avoid twisting, it can cause injury.

### Think Before You Lift

- \* MENTAL LIFTING-Lift the load twice, by first lifting the load mentally.
- \* FIND A BETTER WAY-Mechanical help can be used to avoid heavy loads, twisting motions, repetitive motions, bulky loads, vertical lifting and uneven surfaces. Pushcarts, conveyors, two wheeled carts, hoists, or forklifts are good examples of material handling devices that can be used.

- \* PUSH, DON'T PULL-Twice as much can be pushed than pulled, while running less risk of back injury.
- \* WATCH YOUR FOOTING-Wear proper footwear, take small steps, go slowly and clear a proper pathway free from tripping hazards.

#### Hand Safety When Lifting

- \* Inspect materials for splinters, jagged or sharp edges, burrs, rough or slippery surfaces.
- \* Grasp the object with a firm grip.
- \* Keep fingers away from pinch and shear points, especially when setting down materials.
- \* When handling pipe, lumber or other long objects, keep hands away from the ends to help prevent them from being pinched.
- \* Wipe off greasy, wet or dirty objects before trying to handle them.
- \* Keep hands free from oil and grease.

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