

WEEKLY SAFETY MEETING

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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Job Name _____

Date _____

PREVENTING BACK INJURIES

Perhaps more than any other occupation, construction work puts a hefty burden on your back. You use your back for tasks such as lifting, bending, pushing, and pulling. All of these repeated activities increase your risk of suffering a back injury.

Back injuries and back pain can make your job difficult, unbearable, or even impossible. You must take on the responsibility of preventing back injuries because your safety and livelihood demand that you maintain a healthy back. The good news is that back injuries *are preventable*.

Most of the time, you hear about proper lifting techniques as the method of preventing back injuries. This practice involves letting your legs do the lifting, keeping the object close to your body, and avoiding unnecessary lifting by using mechanical devices. In addition to these, there are other tactics that can help you prevent back injuries.

Improve Your Posture: Poor posture places a lot of stress on your back. Slouching or rounding your shoulders can lead to muscle fatigue and injury. Proper posture keeps your muscles more relaxed. Years of bad posture can also lead to a weakened spine. Get in the habit of holding in your stomach to improve your posture and to avoid putting

excess pressure on your spine. Stand and sit in an upright position to keep your body in proper balance.

Standing Posture: When you stand for long periods, prop one foot up a little to reduce the stress to your lower back. Change your position often and take mini-breaks to stretch or move around. Maintain proper posture, and try not to bend forward to do your work. Whenever possible keep your work between elbow and shoulder level.

Sleeping Posture: A proper sleeping posture is also essential to preventing back injuries. Sleep on a firm mattress—not a hard mattress nor a sagging one. Avoid sleeping on your stomach. Try to sleep on your side (with a pillow between your knees) or on your back (with a pillow under your knees).

Exercise: Aerobic exercise can strengthen and stretch muscles in your stomach and back. Walking, stationary biking, and swimming can improve blood flow to the spine. Losing weight also reduces stress on your back.

Emotional Stress: Stress can lead to muscle tension and back pain. Manage your stress at home and at work by taking walks or with deep-breathing exercises. You can even try yoga or a massage to help you relax.

SAFETY REMINDER

Know your limits and listen to your body!
If you feel back pain, stop the activity that aggravates it.
Report all injuries to your supervisor right away.

Special Topics For Your Project _____

Employee Safety Recommendations _____

S.A.F.E. Cards® planned for this week _____

Reviewed MSDS # _____

Subject _____

Meeting Attended By _____

Supervisor's Signature _____

These instructions do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations.