

Back Injury Prevention Toolbox Talk

In this toolbox talk learn about back injury prevention on the jobsite.

Back Injury Prevention Safety Talk

Back injuries are a common occurrence whenever there is a need to lift heavy materials and equipment on the jobsite. Many workers suffer from some type of back injury each year, making back injury prevention an important safety topic.

Establishing rules and providing education can help protect workers from back injuries and reduce workers' compensation claims.

How do employees injure their backs?

In construction, there are many circumstances that can lead to injuries, especially involving the back. Even simplest tasks can pose a threat of an injury.

Some of the most common causes of a back injury on the jobsite are:

1. Continuous lifting
2. Not bending at the knees when lifting
3. Trying to lift an item alone that is too heavy
4. Misstepping while carrying an item
5. Twisting while lifting an item

These are just some of the many ways that back injuries can occur. There are numerous causes of back injuries, so it is important to stay aware of risks when completing tasks.

Read on to learn our back injury prevention safety tips and recommendations.

Safety while lifting

You may not be able to avoid lifting heavy boxes, tools, and materials as a part of your job. When you do need to lift and move items, you should do so with great caution in order to avoid injury.

Here are some of the ways that you can protect yourself:

1. **Be aware-** Make sure you are [aware of the risks at hand](#) and understand the correct way to lift. Stay mindful as you complete tasks that require lifting.
2. **Take breaks-** If you have been lifting for a while, consider taking a break to recover and recuperate. When you get tired or start feeling weak, you are more likely to get injured.
3. **Monitor your posture-** Using the correct posture when lifting is the number one key to avoiding an injury. Stooping and twisting put you at a much higher risk. Remember to use your knees, not your back, when you are lifting on the job.

[Learn more about back protection while lifting.](#)

Preventing back injuries in the workplace

It is in the best interest of both an employer and their employees to have the right back injury prevention guidelines set in place. The more you can do to help prevent back injuries the better.

Make sure everyone understands and observes these back injury prevention tips.

1. Wear personal protective equipment

If part of job requirements for employees is lifting boxes and other items, heavy or not, the workplace should provide the protective equipment needed to keep them safe. Back braces and belts may provide some protection against injury.

[Employees should also stretch](#) before lifting and use reasonable judgment when and object is too heavy to lift alone. Use assistive equipment for heavy lifting or ask for assistance from another employee when needed.

2. Eliminate unnecessary lifting

To avoid back injuries on the job, it is recommended that you eliminate as much [manual lifting](#) as possible. The employer should make [lifting equipment](#) like dollies and forklifts available so that the need for manual lifting is minimized.

3. Guidelines by administration

It is ideal to make sure that the employees who are lifting heavy items are fully capable of the job. The administration should make rules clear about weight limits for lifting and when to ask for help. A supervisor should be involved with weight limits over 100 lbs., to help ensure the safety of the employees.

4. Engineering controls

The setup of the warehouse or area that the employees are working in should be designed to make their job as safe and risk-free as possible. All shelving and storage areas should be at a reasonable level to lessen the height at which they are lifting objects.

The necessary equipment to lift and move heavy items should be easily accessible.

What happens if you hurt your back on the job?

There are times when, no matter how safe you are, injuries still happen. It is important to make sure you [report an injury or a problem right away](#). Seek medical attention immediately to avoid further issues.

Alert the superintendent or foreman as soon as possible so an official report can be submitted.