



## eSafetyLine

### Back Injury Causes

The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that 80% of American workers will experience back pain in their lifetime and more than 1 million will suffer a back injury each year. Back injury compensation costs employers billions of dollars annually. Factor in the pain and suffering affected employees suffer and back injuries are enormous, costly problems.

There are 2 reasons back injuries are so common. First, most of us don't usually use correct techniques when lifting loads on the job much less at home. Second, the back is built in a way that lends itself to injuries. The human backbone (or spine) is made up of small bones called vertebrae that are stacked one on top of the next. Between each vertebrae is a cushioning pad or disc to prevent the bones from grinding against each other. The spinal cord runs through a tunnel made within the stacked vertebrae and nerves branch from the spinal cord to service the arms, legs and all other body parts. The many parts of the back are held together by ligaments, muscles and tendons. Most simply put: Not an all-together sturdy system.

When this engineering issue is combined with some common contributing factors- it's an injury waiting to happen.

- Poor physical condition- Strong stomach muscles give a lot of support that is needed by the back. If your stomach muscles are weak and flabby, your back won't be getting the support necessary to keep it healthy. When you then lift and/or carry heavy objects, your back is put at further risk.

- Poor posture- Your mother always said that good posture was important but it seems that good posture does more than look good. It helps to keep the back in its natural "S" shaped curve which is best to help prevent injuries.
- Extra weight- The more you weigh, the more stress it puts on your back whenever you bend over or lift something. A pot belly is the enemy of a healthy back.
- Whole body vibrations- Workers that spend a lot of time in cars, trucks and heavy construction equipment experience prolonged exposure to vibrations. This has been shown to greatly increase the likelihood of serious back injury.
- Stress- Tense back muscles are more likely to become strained or spasm.
- Overlifting- Never be afraid to say "This is too heavy for me to lift alone". Being aware of your physical limitations can lead to a healthier back for everyone on a jobsite.

Avoiding these factors or at least being aware of them will help keep your back healthy and you on the job.

### **Discussion Questions**

What are the bones that make up the backbone called?

Why was Mom right about good posture?

# MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPICS ADDRESSED: \_\_\_\_\_

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## EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

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EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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ACTION TAKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

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Supervisor's Signature

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Safety Coordinator's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date