



## **Safety Fact Sheet 0406 – Back Injuries & Lifting**

Environmental Health and Safety – (213) 740-6448

### **Back Injuries**

Back injuries are preventable. Here are some tips you can use in your safety meetings to discuss the proper way to lift and carry. By taking the time to adequately prepare, you can ensure that you and your coworkers will remain injury free.

### **Proper Lifting Techniques**

#### **Prepare For Lifting**

1. Wear shoes appropriate for the task being performed.
2. Wear gloves if needed for gripping the object or to prevent scrapes and cuts.
2. Adequately warm up or stretch prior to attempting to lift heavy objects.

#### **Size Up the Load and Work Area**

1. Assess the load before you lift.
  - a. If the load is heavy or clumsy, get a mechanical aid (i.e. dolly / push cart) or help from a coworker.
  - b. If the weight of the object is unknown, tap it gently to determine if it can be safely lifted.
  - c. Divide large loads into smaller ones.
  - d. Check for rough edges or abnormalities that could affect your grip.
2. Make sure that you have a safe path to carry the load.
  - e. Aisles should be kept clear.
  - f. Avoid wet or slippery areas.
  - g. Make sure you have a clear place to set down the object.

#### **Lift Safely**

1. Keep your feet apart, staggered if possible.
2. Keep your back straight during the lift.
3. Get a good grip on the load and keep your elbows tucked in.
4. Keep the object as close to you as possible.
5. Place your feet close to the object and center yourself over the load.
6. Lift by straightening your legs; raise up with your head first.
7. Do not bend at the waist or twist. If you must turn, turn with your feet, not your body.
8. Set the load down properly using the same principles.