

# MIDWESTERN INSURANCE ALLIANCE

## Loss Control Newsletter

June 1997



Midwestern Insurance Alliance maintains the goal of providing our insureds with a wide range of loss control services. Only one of which is this monthly *Loss Control Newsletter*. To become aware of the many other services offered, contact Loss Control Manager, Keith Wertz at (502) 429-9990 or send e-mail to [krwertz@midwesterninsurance.com](mailto:krwertz@midwesterninsurance.com)

## ***What are You Doing to Prevent Back Injuries ? (PART 3)***

### **Review of Parts 1 and 2**

The previous two Loss Control Newsletters touched upon the significant impact of back injuries, the causes of back injuries, and who is at risk. Additionally, some guidelines for material handling and preventing back injuries among sedentary workers was provided. Furthermore, physical conditioning as an element of an effective back injury prevention program was discussed.

This Loss Control Newsletter focusses upon proper planning and observation in everyday lifting tasks.



### **Think Before You Lift**

Lifting is a commonplace activity in the workplace, yet it accounts for a high percentage of accidents, injuries and property damage. Proper planning and observation of safety rules can reduce the hazards involved.

The 1996 Concordia College Safety Manual includes lifting guidelines for its employees and students.

Whenever possible, of course, use mechanical devices, such as forklifts, cranes and trucks, to lift and move heavy objects. But when manual lifting is necessary, the Concordia publication offers these suggestions:

- Check the load to be lifted to see if it has sharp edges, slivers or wet or greasy spots. If you

must lift such loads, always wear gloves.

- The gloves you use for lifting should themselves be free of oil, grease or other agents that might cause a poor grip.
- Check the path through which you will carry the object. It should be easy to see and free of obstructions or spillage that could cause you to lose your balance or fall.
- Don't overestimate your ability to carry the object the entire distance without setting it down to take a rest.
- Take a preliminary "heft" of the load to make sure you can carry it. If not, get help.
- If more than one person does the lifting/handling, they should be of similar height and

physique. And one person should give the command to lift, etc.

- Two people carrying a piece of pipe or similar material should rest it on the same shoulder. Shoulder pads can be used to prevent discomfort and help reduce fatigue.

- When you lift

1. Set your feet about 10 to 15 inches apart, perhaps with one in front of the other.

2. Bend your knees or assume a squatting position, keeping your back straight and upright, get a firm grip on the object and lift by straightening your knees — not your back.

Carry the load close to your body. To turn or change your position, shift your feet — do not twist your back.

- The steps for setting an object down are the same as above, but in reverse.

## PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Injuries caused by slips, trips and falls are a major burden to American businesses. According to the Florida Agricultural Information Retrieval System, a database of information that includes safety as one of its areas of concern, an estimated 300,000 disabling injuries occur each year in the American work force, with 1,400 worker fatalities. Slips, trips and falls account for about 15 percent to 20 percent of all workers-compensation costs.

Here are some of the factors that contribute to such incidents and tips on how to avoid them:

Improper housekeeping: Keep all work and traffic areas clear of obstacles that can cause slips and trips; keep the floor dry to allow for proper traction between shoes and floor surface.

Inadequate lighting: A worker who walks from a light area into a darker one may trip over a misplaced object or slip on a wet surface. Improve lighting conditions, be sure to put everything in its place and, again, keep floors dry.

Moving too quickly: Don't walk too fast or run from place to place; if you do, you'll find it difficult to slow down to avoid something that is in the way.

Improper footwear: The bottoms of shoes should provide enough traction to allow for safe movement.

Distractions: Pay attention to where you are going, don't carry materials that can obstruct your view of the path ahead, don't wear sunglasses in low-light areas and use handrails when available.

Improper use of equipment: A major cause of falls from heights is the misuse of ladders. Always make sure a ladder is long enough so that when you use it your waist is never higher than the top rung or never higher than the rung at which the side rails rest against the upper support. Never reach too far to the left or right of the ladder. And be sure that the lower and upper ends of the side rails are equipped with slip-resistant pads.



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