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# SAFETY TOOLBOX TALKS

## *52 Meeting Topics to Train Employees on Critical Safety Issues & OSHA Regulations*

### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This Guide contains 52 ready-to-use Toolbox Talks meetings. Each “meeting” is made up of four color-coded pages.

- BLUE = Meeting Leader Discussion Guide.** This sheet is for you. Use it to direct your team through the lesson and encourage participation.
- WHITE = Employee Quiz.** Copy and distribute this to all meeting participants to ensure that they understand the content. Have them date and sign completed quizzes so you can document that they have received training.
- BEIGE = Employee Handout.** Copy and distribute this to all meeting participants so they have something to review after the meeting. It’s a great way to reinforce the message.
- PINK = Case Study.** This sheet is also for you. Read these real-life scenarios to meeting participants to drive home the point that ignoring safety has serious consequences.



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## Meeting Leader Discussion Guide

### Avoiding back strains

#### ▶ Introductory Comments

Each year over a million workers suffer back injuries. They account for 20% of workplace injuries and illnesses and 25% of workers compensation claims.

#### ▶ Meeting Starter Questions

In which of your regular duties are you most likely to suffer back strain? What precautions do you take to avoid back injuries? Have you ever suffered a back injury yourself or witnessed a co-worker suffer one? What were the circumstances, and what was the outcome?

#### ▶ Critical Safety Points

To avoid back strain, you must not be casual about any lifting you do. Before lifting any object, you should automatically run through this list of five questions in your mind:

**Have I checked the object before trying to lift it?** Test every load before you lift by pushing the object lightly with your hands or feet to see how easily it moves. This tells you about how heavy it is. Remember, a small size doesn't always mean a light load.

**Is the load packed correctly?** Make sure the weight is balanced and packed so it won't move around. Loose pieces inside a box can cause accidents if the box becomes unbalanced.

**Is it easy to grip this load?** Be sure you have a tight grip on the object before you lift it. Handles or straps applied to the object may help you lift it safely.

**Is it easy to reach this load?** Rather than reach over your head to get a load, use a ladder or lift to get to it more easily. Get as close as you can to the load. Slide the load towards you if you can. Don't arch your back, and avoid reaching out for the object. Do the work with your legs and your arms – not your back.

**What's the best way to pick up this object?** Like checking weight, you should always ask this question before a lift. Use slow and smooth movements. Hurried, jerky movements can strain the muscles in your back. Keep your body facing the object while you lift it. Twisting while lifting can hurt your back. Keep the load close to your body. Having to reach out to lift and carry an object may hurt your back. To lift with your legs, bend your knees, not your back. Keep your back straight. Try to carry the load in the space between your shoulders and your waist. This reduces strain on your back muscles.

#### Instructions:

Use Toolbox Talks to spark safety discussions. Test knowledge retention with the quiz and distribute handouts for take home value.

Session Date

Supervisor/Instructor

#### Attendee List:

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#### QUIZ ANSWER KEY

1. True
2. True.
3. False. Materials packed loosely in boxes can shift, unbalancing the load.
4. True.
5. False. You must be especially careful lifting loads over your head. Use a ladder if necessary.
6. False. No matter what the weight of an object, you should always use slow, smooth lifting movements.
7. True.
8. True.

# SAFETY TOOLBOX TALKS

## Employee Quiz

Employee Name:	Signature:
Department:	Date:
Score: _____ / 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail
Trainer:	Signature:

### *Avoiding back strains*

**Question 1:** Careless lifting causes so many injuries that there should be no such thing as a casual lift.

True  False

**Question 2:** No matter what the size of an object, you should always test its weight by pushing it with your hands or feet.

True  False

**Question 3:** If materials are packed in a sturdy box, there should be no danger in lifting it.

True  False

**Question 4:** If it's difficult to grip a load, you should consider applying handles or straps.

True  False

**Question 5:** There's no danger in reaching over your head to lift something because you don't have to bend your back.

True  False

**Question 6:** To get a especially heavy load up off the floor, you may have to begin your lift with a quick, jerking motion.

True  False

**Question 7:** You should always keep a load close to your body.

True  False

**Question 8:** You should always lift with your arms and legs, not your back.

True  False

# Employee Handout

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## *Avoiding back strains*

### ► Take home value:

Before lifting any object ask yourself these five questions.

#### **1. Have I checked the object before trying to lift it?**

- Test the weight of the load before lifting it by pushing the object lightly with your hands or feet to see how easily it moves.

#### **2. Is the load packed correctly?**

- Make sure the weight of the load is balanced and packed so it won't move around.

#### **3. Is it easy to grip this load?**

- Keep a tight grip on the material you are lifting.

#### **4. Is it easy to reach this load?**

- Use a ladder or a lift to reach high objects.

#### **5. What's the best way to pick up this object?**

- Use slow, smooth movements to lift an object and avoid twisting.
- Use your leg muscles to lift the load and carry it close to your body.

# SAFETY TOOLBOX TALKS

## Case Study

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### *Avoiding back strains*

#### ► Real life case study:

#### **EMPLOYEE BACK INJURY PROMPTS OSHA INSPECTION**

**R**enaissance MarkCo. (Napa, CA) was fined \$4,050 after an employee accident sparked an OSHA inspection.

An employee reinjured his back while placing an empty wood skid under a printing press. The original injury to his back occurred 20 years previously and had resulted in about one week of lost time per year due to back pain.

The employee had a protrusion of a disc and was admitted to the hospital for one week.

*Note:* If an employee reinjures him or herself and had not been currently treating for the original injury, it counts on the OSHA log as a new injury.

#### **EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT ENDS IN OSHA FINE**

**C**ondado Plaza Hotel and Casino (San Juan, PR) was fined \$975 for exposing employees to ergonomic hazards that could lead to musculoskeletal disorders.

Employees frequently assumed awkward postures of the back and upper extremities including bending of the trunk and extended reaching when handing documents. Employees also were exposed to repetitive twisting of the trunk when accessing printed forms kept on shelves and when opening safes

Other violations include:

- improperly set up visual display terminals,
- allowing employees to stand in static positions for majority of a shift on concrete floors, and
- failing to provide ergonomically designed telephones.

#### **COMPANY FINED WHEN OSHA INVESTIGATES BACK INJURY**

**A**rc Comfort Systems USA (Fair Oaks, CA ) was fined \$1,225 for exposing employees to hazardous working conditions.

An employee carrying a box slipped while walking down a set of temporary metal stairs that connected third and second story elevations. He slid the remainder of the way to the second floor and sustained a bruised lower back.

*Remember* – OSHA can always use the General Duty Clause to cite for any hazards that aren't covered in other standards.