

# Safety Spotlight

Practical tips to keep you safe

## Back Safety

### What leads to back injuries?

- Lifting excessive weight
- Using poor lifting technique such as bending over at the waist or twisting with loads
- Reaching overhead for elevated loads
- Carrying awkwardly-shaped objects
- Sitting or standing too long in one position for extended periods of time
- Working in awkward positions for extended periods of time
- *Contributing factors:* poor physical condition, extra weight, and poor posture

### How to prevent back injuries

- Avoid lifting and bending where possible - use carts or dollies when you can
- Ask for help with heavy loads
- Always use proper lifting techniques
- Stretch before lifting
- Avoid prolonged sitting or standing for extended periods of time
- Avoid lifting loads above shoulders where possible
- Slow down during heavy, repetitive lifting and take rest breaks
- Sleep on a firm mattress, get in shape, and use good posture

### When Lifting:

- Keep your **back straight**
- **Tighten** your abdominal muscles
- **Squat** down to lift items from the floor
- **Use your legs**, not your back, to lift
- **Avoid twisting**- pivot your feet instead
- Keep the load as **close to you** as possible

### Other Helpful Information:

- When pushing or pulling, remember that it is **safer and easier to push** rather than pull.
- **Utilize a cart** or other equipment to transport items whenever possible



### How to Lift Safely



Size up the load. Consider the weight and your physical ability.



Place your feet close to the load.



Squat down, bending your knees and keeping your back straight.



Stand up slowly, using your leg muscles.



Avoid twisting your back while lifting.



Turn your body with changes in your foot position.



Set the load down by bending your knees and using your leg muscles.