

Worksite: \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### Topic C126: **Lifting, Manual**

**Introduction:** Back injuries are one of the most common workplace injuries. Every year thousands of employees needlessly injure themselves due to improper lifting techniques. These back injuries will not only result in time off from work, but can also plague you for the rest of your life. It is important to use “back-saving” methods whenever objects are to be hoisted and handled. Following are guidelines for safe lifting and back injury prevention:

**Stretching your back:** The back is composed of the largest and strongest muscle group in the body. This is why traditionally people will “over-work” their back. It is recommended to take 1-2 minutes to stretch your back prior to lifting or performing any strenuous activity.

- Bend slowly, side to side (20-30 seconds).
- Place your hands on your lower back, bend your neck back and arch your back (20-30 seconds).
- Place your legs together and slowly bend down and try to touch your toes (hold for 20 seconds).

Footing is important. Keep your feet close to the object, and spread your legs so that your feet are about shoulder width apart.

**Before lifting any object ask yourself some questions:**

- What kind of load is it? (How Heavy? How Awkward?)
- Can it be lifted with any mechanical equipment?
- Are there any protruding nails, splinters, slippery surfaces, or sharp edges? (Should I use gloves?)
- Where will I put the load? (Is a spot cleared, and is my path to that spot clear?)
- Can I walk with the load and clearly see where I am going?
- Are there any trip or slip hazards?
- Will I need to twist my body?
- Do I need another person to assist me?

**Proper lifting techniques:**

- Footing is important. Keep your feet close to the object, and spread your legs so that your feet are about shoulder width apart.
- Bend your knees (NOT YOUR BACK!).
- Keep your back as straight as possible.
- Get a good firm grip. Do not lift until your grip is secure.
- Lift object by straightening your legs; keep the load close to your body as you lift the load.
- If you must change direction, do not twist your body. Turn your whole body by changing the position of your feet.
- To set the load down, bend your knees (NOT YOUR BACK). Keep your back as straight as possible, and slowly lower the load.
- When team lifting, lift and lower together. Never drop your end of the load without warning.

**Conclusion:** Remember to continue to stretch your back periodically throughout the day, especially after lunch or rest breaks. Back belts may help maintain the proper curvature of the spine during lifting or physical exertion by applying intra-abdominal compression on the lumbar section of the spine. However, back belts may also provide a false sense of security resulting in employees lifting loads beyond their capabilities. Use safe lifting techniques to protect your back, and always look before you lift.

**Employee Attendance:** (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)


*These guidelines do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.*