



*Helping to make your workplace a safe place*  
[www.MySafetyPoint.com](http://www.MySafetyPoint.com)

## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

### **Back Injuries**

When reviewing claims of our members, by far the most common claim is a back-related injury. We cannot stress strongly enough the importance of proper lifting procedures. Repeated incorrect lifting can result in a variety of injuries. Back strain results from overstretching muscles. Painful herniated discs in the back can also result from incorrect lifting.

See article at right

### **Behavioral Issues in the Workplace**

Behavioral issues of your workers impact workplace productivity and safety.

These behavioral issues can include complacency, fatigue, frustration, rushing, or stress. By identifying and addressing these issues in your operations, you can manage your productivity and safety standards more effectively.

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By properly training your employees and providing them support when lifting, either by equipment or additional manpower, you can reduce the likelihood of injury.

Since no single lifting technique will work in all situations, following the tips below will help avoid back injuries while lifting.

- Size up the load and decide whether you can handle it alone or if help is needed.
- Ask for help if needed to avoid injury.
- Check your intended path of travel for obstacles or other hazards.
- Place your feet at shoulder's width apart and wear good work shoes.
- Bend at the knees – not your waist. Leg muscles are stronger than back muscles. Let your leg muscles do the work.
- Grip the load firmly and use work gloves if necessary.
- Keep the load close to your body. Greater strength and stability occur with the object near the waist.
- Move your feet when you change directions. Do not twist your upper body while carrying or placing the load.

When the lift requires the assistance of a co-worker, these additional tips should be followed:

- Determine in advance who the leader is.
- Plan the lift together.
- Lift and lower in unison and with no sudden moves.
- Communicate with your partner during the entire lift and move.

By being alert when lifting and remembering these safety tips, you can reduce your potential of injury while lifting. If you are ever in doubt about a lift, ask your supervisor or get a co-worker to help you.

Discuss proper lifting procedures at your next safety meeting. Remember to review these procedures with all new employees at the time of hire.



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## Complacency

After employees have been on the job for a while, complacency may set in. The employee becomes familiar with the job functions and simply gets into a routine rather than maintaining a focus on the tasks necessary to complete the job. This lack of attention to detail can result in production run productivity decline, product or equipment damage, and/or employee injury. Supervisors must be aware of how each employee is functioning within the workplace. When complacency is noted, action must be taken to help the employee return to a focused effort toward the job. Actions that can be taken include talking to the worker, job rotation as part of the job schedule, and training for some workers.

## Fatigue

Fatigue can produce devastating consequences in the workplace.

Workers experiencing fatigue are more likely to be injured or cause product or equipment damage. The causes can be from worker actions such as staying up to late on a regular basis or from management allowing too many hours to be worked on a shift or in a week.

Management must control fatigue in the workplace. Actions can include sending workers home during the shift for appropriate rest, reducing an employee's hours worked, or disciplinary actions where warranted for actions that can only be controlled by the employee. Communication is a key in controlling this behavioral issue. The employee must know what is expected and the consequences of their actions.

## Frustration

Conditions at home or in the workplace can result in frustration. Workers demonstrating frustration need counseling by management to attempt to determine the cause of this action. Work related frustration can many times be reduced or eliminated through communications with the work force or on an individual basis or a need for training may be the resolution.

## Rushing

While some employees simply work at a faster pace than other employees, it is important to understand that rushing may be a different behavioral result. When a worker gets behind or feels the need to increase production because of schedule demands, they begin to rush their work pace. This causes them to lose focus on the total job picture and focus on a limited set of criteria.

This factor can result in increased potential of workplace injuries or accidents and could lead to catastrophic results in worker injuries, product loss, and equipment damage. Management must carefully control rushing in the workplace. Properly communicate any changes in production schedule to reduce an employee's perception that they need to overly hurry up to complete a job. They need to remain focused on the detail and work safely.



References: MySafetyPoint Technical Bulletin

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