**Safe Lifting Techniques**

**INTENT:** To provide employees with the proper procedures for safe lifting of materials.

**SAFE PRACTICES:**

1. Before lifting, ask yourself whether the object needs to be lifted. Can it be pushed or pulled, or does it even have to be moved?
2. Before you lift, plan the move:
3. Decide in advance how you are going to do the job.
4. Plan your route – it should be free from tripping hazards.
5. Determine where the object will be set down. Will you need help?
6. Look over the object to see where and how to hold it.
7. Remove grease and oil from the object so it will not slip from your grip.
8. Consider the distance the object is to be moved. Plan rest stops if necessary.
9. Make sure there is enough space to handle the object safely.
10. Use a forklift, pushcart, hand dolly or conveyor for things not meant to be moved by hand.
11. How to Lift:
12. Look over the object to be lifted to make sure it is not too heavy or clumsy for good balance. Also inspect it to make sure there are no sharp edges, slivers, or other things which might cause injury.
13. Stand close to the load with feet apart for good balance, one foot alongside the load and one behind. Feet spread give greater stability.
14. Bend your knees and keep your back straight. “Straight” does not mean “vertical”. A straight back keeps the spine, back muscles, and organs of the body in correct alignment. Also, straddle the load somewhat to help your center of gravity.
15. Grasp the object firmly. Many lifting accidents occur when the load slips from the hand. Hold the load close with arms and elbows tucked in close to your body. Extended arms have less strength and power. Keeping the arms tucked in also helps keep body weight centered.
16. Breathe in – inflated lungs help support the spine.
17. Lift with the legs. Gradually straighten your knees and stand, bringing your back to a vertical position. Avoid quick, jerky motions that can suddenly stress your back.
18. Turn with your feet instead of twisting your back.
19. Follow the principles of safe lifting as outlined above (straight back, use your knees) for putting the object down.

Remember: About half of all back injuries result from improper lifting. Using these safe lifting procedures will help you avoid the chance of having a painful back injury.