

Safe LIFTING techniques can SAVE YOUR BACK!

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than one million workers experience back injuries each year. Approximately one fourth of all workers compensation indemnity claims are a result of back injuries and lower back pain is one of the most common reasons that people miss work, second only to the common cold. In the United States alone, we spend nearly \$100 billion annually in medical bills, disability and lost productivity at work from back injuries. A survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that nearly 75% of back injuries occurred while performing lifting tasks, which underscores the importance of reducing back injuries caused by lifting. Although no approach has completely eliminated back injuries, a substantial portion could be minimized by incorporating an effective control program along with an ergonomics analysis and proper design of work tasks.

There are several steps that Kent County employees can take prior to performing any lifting task that will help minimize the risk of injury.

Plan Ahead

- Know what you are lifting and how you will lift it.
- Be aware of the weight of the object.
- Determine whether or not it's safe to lift on your own.
- Make sure the work area is flat, dry and clear of debris.

Check Your Pathway

- Make sure the lift pathway is clear.
- Remove any tripping hazards or debris.
- Check for any wet or slick surfaces.

Use Ergonomic Equipment

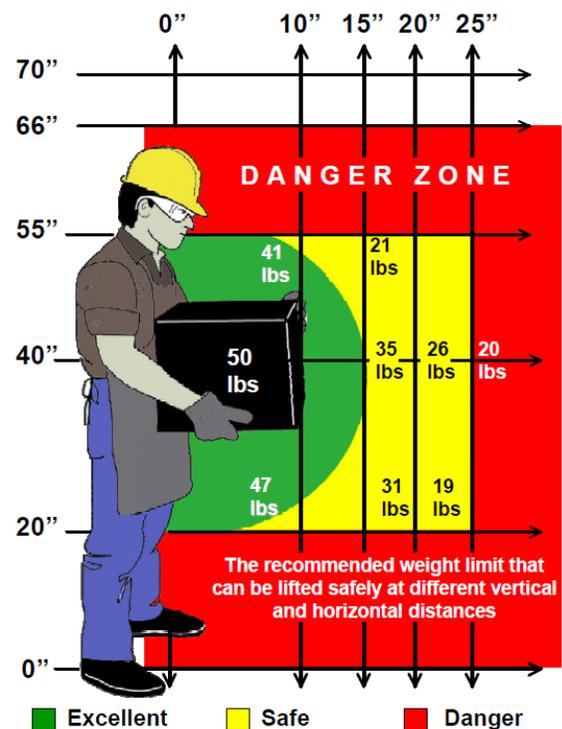
- Use lift assists, forklift, dolly, cart, hand truck or hoist.
- Make sure you are trained before using the equipment.

Get Help When Needed

- When lifting awkward or heavy loads, utilize a two person lift.
- Make sure you lift at the same time and keep the load level.

Wear Proper PPE

- Wear proper required protective shoes and gloves if needed.



Once you have determined that you are ready to safely lift an object and your path is clear, use this basic lifting technique to avoid any injuries.



- Get as close to the object as possible.
- Use a wide stance with one foot forward and to the side of the object for good balance.
- Keep your back straight, push your buttocks out, and use your legs and hips to lower yourself down to the object.
- Slide the object as close to you as possible.
- Put the hand (same side of your body as the forward foot) on the side of the object furthest from you.
- Use this basic lifting technique for small objects when you can straddle the load and use a wide stance.
- Put the other hand on the side of the object closest to you. Your hands should be on opposite corners.
- Grasp the object firmly with both hands.
- Prepare for the lift, tighten your core muscles, look forward and upward, keep a straight and strong back.
- Lift slowly and follow your head and shoulders. Hold the load close to your body. Lift by extending your legs with your back straight, and breathe out as you lift.



Using proper lifting techniques can help prevent downtime due to avoidable back injuries. With a little practice, precautionary methods such as these can become good daily habits that could help prevent back injuries both on and off the job. Remember, no approach will completely eliminate back injuries. However, a substantial portion can be prevented by incorporating effective administrative and engineering controls.

For any questions regarding safe lifting techniques or any other safety related matter, contact your Department Head or Kent County's Safety Officer BRANDON OLENIK.

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