



Minnesota Electrical Association

Electrical

Toolbox Talks

Back Safety

1. Bring the item as close to your body as possible before you lift it.
2. Put your feet about shoulder width apart with one foot slightly in front of the other.
3. Bend your knees to a comfortable degree and push up from the knees. Never bend at the waist. Your stronger leg muscles will bear more of the weight and your chances of injuring weaker back muscles is greatly diminished.
4. Always lift straight up slowly and smoothly in a continuous motion. Avoid jerky movements that can cause injuries.
5. Avoid twisting motions while carrying a heavy item as it can put your back in a vulnerable position.
6. Putting your load down is as important as picking it up. Use the same technique. Slowly and smoothly lower the load by keeping the back as straight as possible and bending at the knees so your stronger leg muscles bear most of the weight.
7. Always make sure the load is balanced.
8. Carry the load at arm length. Avoid lifting or carrying items above your head or on the side of your body.
9. If the load is too heavy for you to carry comfortably, get help. Never carry what can be placed on a dolly, pushcart, or other moving device.
10. Be prepared. Always check the floor for slippery or uneven spots and move any obstacles out of your path--before lifting and moving your load.
11. Back belts are no longer recommended by OSHA. Instead, workers with cardiovascular problems should avoid wearing them since they tend to raise worker's blood pressure during use. Instead of using belts, do blood pressure screening and an ergonomic assessment of the job.

Notes: For additional safety information, check manufacturer's guidelines, contact a competent safety professional or the OSHA Consultation Office.

These rules are samples only. Each employer is responsible for working with his/her employees to write rules that meet the specific needs of their individual company and type of work. Each employer is responsible for assessing the accuracy of their rules and keeping them up to date. OSHA requires a minimum of an update and employee re-training annually.

Version 2018

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