

Back Injuries

The most common type of employee injury in the work place is sprain/strain of the lower back. Back injuries account for one out of every three on-the-job injuries. Lifting, carrying and other manual material handling operations present significant potential for employee injury. Completion of the five simple steps listed below will assist with the reduction and control of back injuries.

1. Review work tasks

If work requires continuous material handling or heavy lifting, pre-employment physicals, strength testing, as well as physical conditioning and stretching programs, coupled with lifting training, will ensure that workers are physically fit and knowledgeable on how to avoid back injuries.

2. Inspect work areas

Slips and falls cause many back injuries. Wet/slippery floors, poor housekeeping conditions and improperly maintained stairs/ladders/walking surfaces should be corrected in order to reduce the chance for injury.

3. Use mechanical lifting devices

Although lifting capabilities vary by individual, the potential for injury increases significantly when material to be moved approaches or exceeds 30 pounds or is excessively bulky. The use of material handling equipment will not only reduce injury potential, but will also increase productivity.

4. Instruct employees to lift with their legs

The leg muscles are much stronger than the back muscles. With the back kept straight, load kept close to the body, and the legs used to lift, there is less strain placed on the back muscles. Potential for injury is reduced.

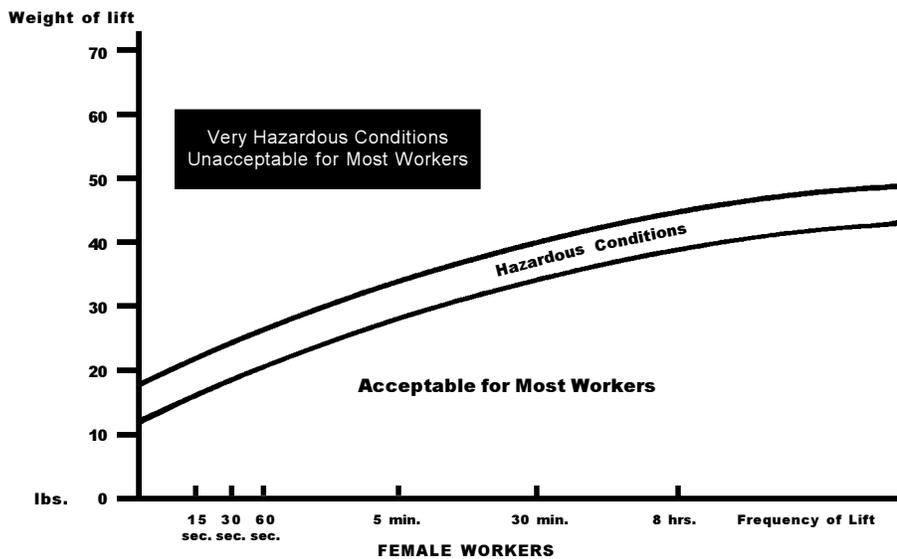
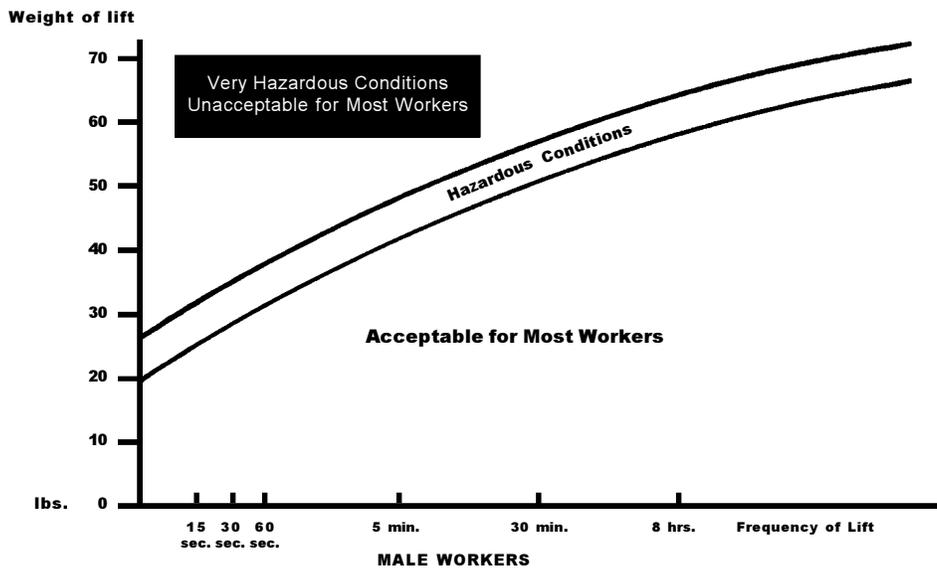
5. Provide adequate help

Provide adequate help to move heavy or awkward items. Workers who try to move heavy objects without assistance can exceed their limitations and injure themselves. Getting help takes very little extra time and will reduce the likelihood of serious injury.

For additional advice concerning safe material handling procedures, contact the Great American Loss Prevention Department.

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Lifting Task Evaluation Guide



- VERY HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS, <50% of all workers are able to perform these tasks without injury
- HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS, 50% - 75% of all workers are able to perform these tasks without injury
- ACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS, 75% of all workers are able to perform these tasks without injury

This guide should be used as a general reference for tasks being performed under reasonable conditions of temperature and humidity. In addition, it assumes an average hand-to-lower back distance of 15 inches. This was selected since it reflects the “typical” lifting conditions.

If your lifting task falls in the “very hazardous conditions” or “hazardous conditions” areas, the task should be eliminated or modified to reduce the injury potential of the involved workers. Refer to the “Manual Material Handling Control Methods” Loss Control Data Guide (F.13494) for specific modification methods.

The loss prevention information and advice presented in this brochure are intended only to advise our insureds and their managers of a variety of methods and strategies based on generally accepted safe practices, for controlling potentially loss producing situations commonly occurring in business premises and/or operations. They are not intended to warrant that all potential hazards or conditions have been evaluated or can be controlled. They are not intended as an offer to write insurance coverage for such conditions or exposures, or to simply that Great American Insurance Company will write such coverage. The liability of Great American Insurance Company is limited to the specific terms, limits and conditions of the insurance policies issued.
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