



TOOLBOX TALK #11

Monday Morning Safety Reminders

Vol. 1 No. 11

WATCH YOUR BACK!

We talked last time about materials handling and I made mention of how some injuries can be cumulative. The best and most serious example of this is your back. There is no more painful and debilitating injury than one to your back. You may know someone who has suffered a back injury, and if you do, you know what I'm talking about.

An important issue with regard to back safety is the cumulative effect of improper lifting and other movements, such as twisting and pulling. This over time can result in back pain. Even injuries suffered in your youth might be aggravated later in life, as injuries to the spine tend to remain injuries, even if the pain subsides. That's why we take seriously such simple illustrations as proper lifting.

Improper lifting has a cumulative effect. Let me give you an example (toss a pencil on the ground). How much does that pencil weight...a couple of ounces? (Bend over and pick up the pencil, illustrating an improper lifting technique.) Now, how much weight did I just lift using my back? The two ounces wasn't a problem, but my entire upper body represents more than a hundred pounds I just lifted using my back. Over time, this habit of lifting with our backs can result in a serious condition. (Then, demonstrate the "kneel and lift" method). This is the proper way to lift things. Our leg muscles are made for this purpose and aren't going to give out on us. In fact, our leg muscles get stronger when we use them. The spinal cord doesn't have the quality of getting stronger with use.

You can see how important this can be when we are lifting larger objects as we do every day. This is a very serious safety issue. We all want to enjoy life and you can't do it with chronic back pain. A back injury is a lousy retirement plan. So, make a habit of proper lifting, here, at home and everywhere you go. If you take care of your back, it will take care of you.

Facilitator Notes: Make certain that every member of your crew understands this concept. If you know of any real life examples of back injury and its consequences, share them. You may want to ask everyone in the group to collectively practice lifting with their legs. This will have the effect of letting them all do it together and relieve possible personal concerns that it might "look silly." Emphasize the long term importance of safe lifting and back safety.

Additional Notes: _____

Crew Member Comments: _____

Presented By: _____ **Date/Time** _____

Attendees: _____

List additional attendees on back of sheet