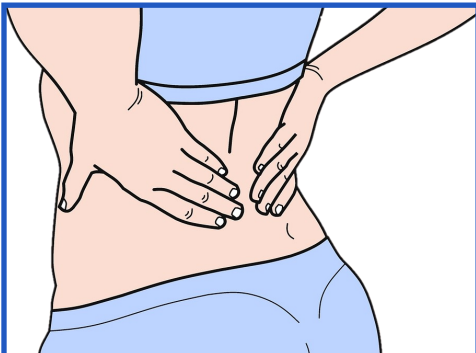




## PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES



The occurrence of back pain and injuries continues to be a prevalent reality in American society. It's estimated that 4 out of 5 Americans will experience some level of back pain and discomfort in their lifetime. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that over 1 million Americans annually suffer back injuries in the workplace. Those back injuries represent about 20% of all the workplace injuries American workers suffer annually and represent about 25% of all the annual workers' compensation injury claims that result in indemnity payments because time is lost from work. In 2016 and 2017, the National Safety Council reported that the average cost per back injury claim that resulted in lost workdays was about \$33,248. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 75% of all back injuries occur during lifting activities.

The annual cost of treating back injuries exceeds \$100 billion. However, the truth is that most back injuries caused by lifting could be prevented if proper planning, preparation and lifting techniques were used.

There is a 10 to 1 ratio between the amount of weight that a person lifts versus the amount of force that is exerted on their back to lift the object, when done correctly. When you lift an object correctly, the weight being lifted is the sum of the weight of the object plus the weight of your trunk. So, if the object being lifted weighs 10 lbs. and the weight of your trunk is 100 lbs., you are really lifting 110 lbs., when done correctly. The force or pressure exerted on your back when lifting that 110 lbs., when done correctly, magnifies by a factor of 10, so the force or pressure your back is subjected to when making the lift, when done correctly, totals 1,100 lbs. If the lift is not done correctly, then the force or pressure your back is subjected to during the lift will be more than 1,100 lbs. The bottom line is that you don't have to lift very much weight to exert substantial force or pressure on your back. And, if you use improper lifting techniques, you can easily injure your back when lifting very light objects, or even when not lifting anything at all, but simply bending your trunk forward towards the horizontal plane and then lifting it back up into the vertical plane.

**Watch your back!**  
80% of Americans will have back pain issues.



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# PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES

To prevent back injuries when lifting, please use the following lifting techniques:

## Before You Lift

- Analyze what you are going to lift (it's size, shape and weight).
- If you know it's weight in advance, assess if it's too heavy for one person; if so, get a 2<sup>nd</sup> person to help you lift it. Objects that weigh 1/3 or more of your own body weight could be too heavy to lift alone. If determined to be too heavy, use the 2-man team lifting approach or use mechanical lifting/material handling assistance devices (carts, dollies, hand trucks, pallet jacks, forklifts, hoists, etc.) which you have been trained to use to safely lift and move the object.
- If object's weight is unknown, give object the "Heft Test"; grasp object and lift one corner of the object to determine if you can safely handle and control the object's weight or if assistance is needed.
- Determine how and where you will grasp the object to best control it during movement; at least one hand (and preferable both hands), should be under, on opposite sides and near opposite corners of the object.
- Remember that even light weight, large, bulky or odd shaped objects may be unsafe for one person to lift, control or see around and other assistance may be required.
- Make sure the immediate area around the object is flat as possible, clean and dry and the lift pathway to its destination is clear, dry and free of tripping hazards. Be aware of slick hard surfaced floors.
- Assess the location where you will set the object down for obstructions or impediments and eliminate them before lifting and moving the object.
- Wear proper protective equipment (gloves, shoes, eye protection) as warranted.



## Conducting the Lift



- Get as close to the object as possible
- Spread feet about shoulder's width apart and place one foot slightly in front of the other and to the side of the object to achieve an anchored, balanced stance.
- Squat down next to the object, bending at your knees and hips while keeping your head up and back straight, resting on one knee if necessary.
- Slide/pull the object as close to you as possible, then establish a firm, 2-point grip on the object with at least one hand under it.
- Take a deep breath and tighten your abdominal muscles, then lift the object slowly using your legs as the lifting force; keep the object as close to your body as possible while looking straight ahead and keeping your head and your back straight. Exhale as you complete the lift, stabilizing the object at your waist level.
- If using the buddy system to lift the object, make sure both parties lift at the same time and speed, so control of the object is maintained.
- When turning while carrying the object, don't twist at the waist with your feet stationary; turn your body in unison using your feet as the pivot point.
- Walk slowly along the lift path to where the object will be placed with eyes focused straight ahead viewing the lift path.



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# PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES



## Setting the Object Down

- When the object's destination point is reached, get as close as possible to the destination point, then place your feet about shoulder's width apart and place one foot slightly in front of the other and to one side of the destination point or surface.
- Squat down next to the destination point, bending at your knees and hips while keeping your head up and back straight, lowering the object onto the destination surface.
- Release your grip on the object, then use your hands to align or balance the object on its destination surface.
- Use your legs to elevate your body back to the standing position, keeping your head up and back straight.

Repeatedly using the above lifting technique should help to prevent you from sustaining a back injury due to lifting.

A company called Ergonomics Plus, which consults with businesses to provide ergonomic injury prevention solutions to manage and reduce musculoskeletal injuries, is offering on-line a free handout on proper lifting techniques which I think is a very good reference resource for those who engage in regular manual material handling through lifting. That free 2-page handout can be found at the following link:

<https://ergo-plus.com/proper-lifting-techniques/>

Click on the blue Proper Lifting Techniques Handout (.pdf) link to access and print out the handout. Keep the handout where you can easily refer to it as a constant reminder of the proper lifting techniques you should use.

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*learning & organizational development*

HAVE YOU TAKEN  
REPETITIVE MOTION INJURY  
TRAINING?

(Hint: It's really important!)

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# HAZARD REPORTING FORM 401

*Safety Newsletter*

**HAZARD REPORTING FORM**  
(Attach additional pages as needed)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TO: \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_

TO: Human Resources Safety Division Mail Stop 2170

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_

To report a hazard anonymously, please call the Safety Office Hotline at (951) 955-5868

Please indicate type of hazardous circumstances:  Hazardous Condition  
 Hazardous Act (Procedure or Practice)

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of unsafe condition or act:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Suggestion for Improving Safety: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSE – WITHIN 5 WORK DAYS**

I agree this is a hazard

Date Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_  
Estimated Date of Correction: \_\_\_\_\_  
Action Taken: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I do not agree that this is a hazard

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Employees are advised that use of this form or other reports of unsafe conditions or practices are protected by law. The employer is prohibited from taking any action against an employee in reprisal for exercising rights to participate in the reporting of hazards. The employer will investigate all hazard reports as required by the Injury and Illness Prevention Program Standard (T8CCR & 3203) and advise the person who reported it of the employer's response. If the report was made anonymously, the employer will advise employees of the area affected.

EMPLOYEE: Complete Hazard Reporting Form and send copy of form to your immediate supervisor. Provide a copy to Department Safety Representative Coordinator and County Safety Division.

SUPERVISOR: Send a copy of the Hazard Reporting Form Response to employee, Safety Representative/Coordinator and County Safety Division. Keep original copy for review by Department Head and required record-keeping.

SOP Form No. 401 (05/13)

Title 8, California Code of Regulations, Section 3203 titled Injury and Illness Prevention Program lists 8 Program elements that must exist and be addressed in every employer's written Injury and Illness Prevention Program (aka IIPP). The 4<sup>th</sup> listed Program element that must exist and be addressed is Hazard Assessment. What procedures the employer has for identifying, evaluating and correcting workplace hazards, including scheduled periodic inspections to identify unsafe conditions and work practices, must be listed in this section of the employer's IIPP. Inspections shall be made to identify and evaluate hazards:

- A. *When the Program is first established (exception: Those employers having in place on July 1, 1991, a written Injury and Illness Prevention Program complying with previously existing Section 3203).*
- B. *Whenever new substances, processes, procedures or equipment are introduced to the workplace that represent a new occupational safety and health hazard; and*
- C. *Whenever the employer is made aware of a new or previously unrecognized hazard.*

Under the Cal/OSHA Safety Orders, employees at all levels (management, supervisory and line staff) within a company or organization have a responsibility to report any unsafe conditions or unsafe acts they observe in their workplaces in between scheduled inspection activities. To provide a process and format for employees to report unsafe conditions and unsafe acts in a formal manner, the County Safety Division developed County Standard Safety Operations Manual Document 401 titled Hazard Recognition & Loss Control Reporting Unsafe Conditions. It assigns responsibility for reporting and acting on unsafe conditions and unsafe acts to employees, managers and supervisors, Departments and County Safety Division and their staff. It also provides a written format for formally reporting unsafe conditions and unsafe acts, which is Hazard Reporting Form 401.

NEED A HAZARD REPORTING FORM?  
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RIVCO HR

safety division

CLICK HERE OR GO TO <https://safety.rc-hr.com/Home.aspx>



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# HAZARD REPORTING FORM 401

Copies of Hazard Reporting Form 401 should be made readily available to employees in a hanging slip file placed on or near the employee labor postings board in every County facility for ease of, and even anonymous, access by employees. Form 401 can be used in two distinct ways. First, it can be used by an employee for the initial reporting of an observed unsafe condition or unsafe employee act. Second, it can be used to document an unsafe condition or act reported by other initial reporting means (verbal, email, phone call, etc.) which can't be immediately corrected for some reason (requires extra funding, outside vendor hiring for correction, Board of Supervisor's approval, etc.). In the latter case, Form 401 can either be completed by the original employee who reported the unsafe condition or act or be completed by the supervisor the unsafe condition or act was initially reported to by other reporting means. Once completed, copies of Form 401 should be kept by the original completer of the Form, then provided to their immediate supervisor, their Department Safety Representative and the County Safety Division Office.

When a supervisor receives a Form 401 from one of their employees, regardless of whether or not the supervisor agrees that the submitted issue is a safety hazard or not, they are required by County Safety Policy to respond to the employee who completed and submitted Form 401 in writing on the Supervisor's Response Section of the form within 5 working days indicating what action they have taken regarding the reported issue or why they don't agree that the reported issue constitutes a safety hazard.

The Hazard Reporting Form 401 can also be submitted anonymously by an employee to their immediate supervisor, their Department Safety Representative and to the County Safety Division Office. When completed and submitted anonymously, once the supervisor completes their response section in writing within 5 working days of receiving Form 401, the supervisor must post Form 401 displaying their written response on or near the employee labor postings board for 5 working days so the un-named original submitter of the Form 401 can view the supervisor's written response without giving away their identify.

When an employee chooses to initially report an unsafe condition or act anonymously via the County Safety Division Office's Safety Hotline at (951) 955-5856, a County Safety Division staff member should complete the Hazard Reporting Form 401, based on the information provided in the Safety Hotline call, and then forward a copy of the completed Form 401 to the employee's immediate supervisor, if known or identified, or to the Department's Senior Management Team or Safety Representative if the immediate supervisor isn't know or identified for required follow-up.

When the County Safety Division Office receives a copy of a completed Hazard Reporting Form 401, it is their responsibility to review, evaluate and follow-up with the Department the Form 401 originated from to ensure that corrective actions either have or will be taken or have already been completed. If the reported safety hazard can't be resolved by the Department the Form 401 originated from, then the County Safety Division Manager shall determine and recommend the appropriate corrective action, or recommend the matter be referred to the County Safety Committee for review and recommended resolution.

The Hazard Reporting Form 401 is a valuable tool for use by County employees in formally reporting observed unsafe conditions or acts to management. County employees are encouraged to avail themselves of this tool when they see an unsafe condition or unsafe act in their workplaces.



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# JULY SAFETY TIPS



- ☑ Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- ☑ The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- ☑ Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- ☑ Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- ☑ Never leave your grill unattended.
- ☑ Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

## CHARCOAL GRILLS

- ☑ There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- ☑ If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- ☑ Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.

- ☑ There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- ☑ When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container

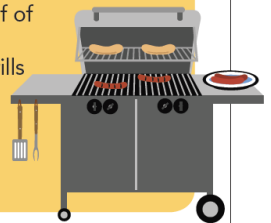
## PROPANE GRILLS

Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off both the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department. If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not move the grill.

If the flame **goes out**, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least **5 minutes** before re-lighting it.

## FACTS

- ! July is the peak month for grill fires.
- ! Roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.



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