

Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety

Introduction

Back disorders can develop gradually or can be the result of a single traumatic event. Sprains and strains are the most common causes of lower back pain. Improper lifting or lifting loads that are too heavy for the back to support, falling, or sports activities are a few examples of back injury causes. Of these, lifting improperly or lifting loads that are too heavy for the back to support is the largest single cause of back pain and injury. Instituting proper lifting techniques and other safety measures can significantly reduce back injuries at [Company Name].

As part of [Company Name]'s ongoing commitment to safety in the workplace and in compliance with OSHA standards, this hospitality facility has developed a Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program as another opportunity to enhance the safety and health of [Company Name]'s employees.

Purpose

Back safety awareness is extremely important due to the prevalence and potential severity of back injuries.

This program is a key document for assisting in increasing employee awareness of the importance of back safety. [Company Name] is dedicated to protecting its employees from on-the-job injuries. All employees of [Company Name] have the responsibility to work safely on the job by following this and all company policies and procedures when lifting or handling materials.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of this facility that all employees whose job duties involve lifting will receive proper training in lifting techniques. It is also the policy that employees will be provided with proper education regarding the mechanics of the back and measures that can be taken to protect the back from injury. This facility requires the procedures in this plan be followed to provide a safe work environment. These procedures on safe lifting practices have been implemented to ensure that employees are trained to protect themselves from the hazards of improper lifting practices.

[Note: If the facility provides back support belts as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), add comments regarding the policy, equipment, training, and disciplinary action for failure to follow PPE guidelines as they relate to back safety].

Program Administration

[General Manager] or [Designated Individual] is responsible for the implementation and management of the hospitality facility's Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program. The program will be maintained, reviewed, and updated at least annually and whenever necessary to reflect new or modified procedures that affect issues related to back safety and lifting procedures within this hospitality facility.

Responsibilities

Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program Administrator

The duties of the Program Administrator are as follows:

1. Conduct a hazard assessment. Identify affected employees/departments.
2. Review workers' compensation claims and OSHA 300 logs for back related loss trends.
3. Become familiar with the facility's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Program.
4. Identify need of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
5. Identify alternative materials handling equipment.
6. Conduct and/or organize training sessions.
7. Evaluate the written program.
8. Know the rules for record keeping.
9. Update the Accident Investigation & Reporting Program at least annually or as needed.
10. Supervisors and Management
11. Identify job duties that include heavy lifting.
12. Instill general safety awareness as it relates to back safety.
13. Identify and eliminate, when possible, job hazards.
14. Train new employees, whose job responsibilities include lifting, on proper lifting techniques. Periodically (at least annually) conduct refresher training.
15. Provide an overview on back safety to all employees (even if their job duties normally do not include heavy lifting) to assist in protecting employees from spur-of-the-moment unsafe lifting.
16. Ensure that all employees understand that if an item is too heavy, they should ask for help.
17. Provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as needed.
18. Provide alternative materials handling equipment, as needed.
19. Initiate appropriate disciplinary action when an associate fails to follow the safety requirements of the hospitality facility.

Employee

1. Comply with the Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program procedures.
2. Ask for help in lifting or pushing heavy items.
3. Report any accident or injury to the supervisor.
4. Immediately report unsafe conditions, equipment, or observed practices to the supervisor.
5. Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as required.
6. Use alternative materials handling equipment, as needed.
7. Keep the body healthy (e.g., stretching)

Hazard Assessment

A hazard assessment will be conducted to determine the job duties that require lifting or material handling. Employees will be identified and documented (see **Appendix A**) and then trained on proper lifting techniques and alternative handling equipment (see **Appendix B**) that is available.

Back Safety Techniques

1. Sizing the Load – Do Not Manually Lift Heavy Objects
2. Before even attempting to lift an object, it is important to size up the load. Determine if the load is light enough to lift. If the load is too heavy, try to do the following:
 3. Make objects smaller.
 4. Use smaller containers.
 5. Use lighter containers.
 6. Lighten the loads in containers.
 7. If the size and weight of the load cannot be reduced, it must be determined if a team lift or lifting device is necessary.
8. Reaching – Try to Not Reach Above Shoulders
9. Reaching for objects, especially in high places, can strain the back. Some back safety techniques to use are:
 10. Reach only as high as your shoulders.
 11. Use an approved stool or stepladder if needing to get closer to the load.
 12. Test the weight of the load by pushing up on a corner before lifting. *If it's too heavy, get help.*
13. Bending – Do Not Bend Over from the Waist
14. When bending down to reach or lift, move whole body to protect the back. Some back safety techniques to use are:
 15. Bend the knees and hips, not the back.
 16. Kneel down on one knee, if necessary.
 17. Get as close to the object as possible so you will not have to reach with your arms.
18. Lifting – Do Not Use Back to Bend
19. Lifting is one of the most common causes of back injuries. Some back safety techniques to use are:
 20. Size up the load. If it seems like more than you can handle, get help.
 21. Face the load squarely.
 22. Get a firm footing.
 23. Tighten your abdominal muscles to support your back when you lift.
 24. Bend your knees and get a grip on the load.
 25. Lift with your legs – not your back.
 26. Lift gradually, not suddenly.
 27. Keep the load close to your body.

28. Do not twist while lifting.

Push – Do Not Pull

Pulling large objects can be as hard on the back as lifting. Instead, push the load. Some back safety techniques to use are:

- Stay close to the load, without leaning forward.
- Tighten your stomach muscles as you push.
- Push with both arms, keeping your elbows bent.
- Turn – Do Not Twist the Back

For some tasks, such as turning a large valve, you may be tempted to twist. Some back safety techniques to use are:

- Get close to the object. Kneel down on one knee, if necessary.
- Position yourself so you are stable.
- Use arms and legs to do the work – not just the back.

Training

[Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program Administrator] is responsible for ensuring that training is conducted. Training may be conducted by [Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program Administrator] or [Designated Individual]. Initial training at new employee orientation shall consist of:

1. An overview of the facility's Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program.
2. Proper lifting techniques.
3. An opportunity to ask questions.

In addition, departmental training shall include the following:

1. Specific job related duties that involve lifting.
2. Proper lifting techniques to perform the assigned duties.
3. Any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is available.
4. Alternative materials handling equipment that is available.
5. An opportunity to ask questions.

The training will establish employee proficiency in back and lifting safety duties and will introduce new or revised procedures as necessary.

[Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program Administrator] shall certify that the training has been accomplished. The certification will contain each employee's name, the signatures of the trainers, and the dates of the training. The certification will be available for inspections by employees or their authorized representatives.

Employees who experience back-related workers' compensation injuries shall receive re-training on proper lifting techniques and alternative materials handling equipment.

Record keeping

[Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program Administrator] is responsible for maintaining the training records of this facility. Training records will be filled out for each employee upon completion of training. These documents will be kept for at least 3 years and will include:

1. The date of the training session,
2. The contents or summary of the training session,
3. The names and qualifications of the person(s) conducting the training,
4. The names and job titles of all persons attending the training session.
5. Training records will be provided upon request to the employee or the employee's authorized representative within 15 working days of the request.

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have been informed of the _____ facility's Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety Program and have knowledge of where the written program is maintained. I have been provided initial training and understand that my supervisor will conduct additional job-related training. I understand my responsibilities as they relate to Back Safety/Proper Lifting Safety, and I accept this plan and procedures as working documents that I will support and follow in my daily work at the hospitality facility. I further understand that failure to follow these procedures or instructions from management may result in disciplinary action.

(Facility Name)

Employee Name (print and sign)

Date

Supervisor's Name (print and sign)

Date

Appendix A Hazard Assessment

Employees in the following departments have job duties that require lifting or materials handling. These employees are to be trained on proper lifting techniques and alternative materials handling equipment that is available.

[Sample]

Department	Job Title
Maintenance	